

The Way of Truth and Reality

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The Way of Truth and Reality
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This book is dedicated to my friend Mario Virgili

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1. Introduction

The way of truth and reality is to live a life consciously and deliberately devoted to the increasing realisation and expression of the truth and of reality. This book is dedicated to an exploration of this way. As such, it explores questions and themes such as: How do we define truth and reality? What is the truth and reality of ourselves and our lives? What is the value of truth and reality? How do we realise truth and reality? And, how do we live a life in harmony with truth and reality? Each of us is treading the way of truth and reality, for each of us has his or her realisation of what is true and real, and lives accordingly. Of course, this realisation of what is true and real may be more or less conscious, more or less accurate, and more or less full or complete, but it is there in the mind and heart of each of us, and shapes our lives accordingly. The need for truth and reality is *inherent* to our nature. In part, the reason for this is obvious: we have an unavoidable need to find out what is true and real so that we can live in that way which brings us the greatest fulfilment and satisfaction. However, this is only part of a much more profound reason why each of us has an innate need for truth and reality: each of us is essentially a Spiritual Being, a Soul, where the fundamental purpose of our lives is to increasingly realise and give expression to our Spiritual nature, and inherent to this development is the increasing realisation and expression of the truth and of reality. Whether we are conscious of it or not, the path of life, the path of Spiritual realisation, and the path of truth and reality are really one, integral path. Overall and ultimately the way of truth and reality is rejuvenating, inspiring, uplifting and liberating, but also, for many reasons, this is an arduous path. It requires the increasing development of our logical, rational, intuitive and, ultimately, mystical capacities. For many or most of us this way will mean, in large part, a subversion and inversion of what we currently believe or experience to be true and real, and in which have so much invested—including our beliefs about and experiences of who and what we are, the nature of the world in which we live, and the nature of the Spiritual. In turn, this will require significant changes to the way we live. Thus, the path of truth and reality naturally requires qualities such as devotion, courage, humility, true openness of mind and heart, and also the capacity to live with periods of confusion and suffering as old beliefs, experiences and ways are broken down and left behind. The way of truth and reality is a difficult path out of the darkness, and which we are all undertaking. This book is written with the purpose of throwing some more light upon this path, and hopefully, providing some encouragement and inspiration for those who need it.

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2. Exposing the Delusions and Illusions of the Conventional or Ego-Centred View of Reality

We may define reality as that which actually is, the actual nature of existence, and not as that which we wrongly believe and imagine the actual nature of existence to be. Truth may be defined as the absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete knowing of what actually is, reality, or part (an aspect) of reality. The path of truth then is inseparable from the path of reality, for truth is the knowing of reality. The more we deepen into the truth and give expression to that truth in our lives, the more we deepen into the knowing of reality and give expression to that knowing of reality, which is to live in accord with reality.

What then is the truth and reality of existence, including ourselves? As a prelude to answering this question I would like to begin, in this chapter, by considering a view of reality which most or many people take, in full or in large part, to be true. This I will call the conventional or ego-centred view of reality, for it is our identification with and attachment to the ego which is at the centre of this view and keeps it in place. I will briefly show that such a view and experience of reality is largely delusory and illusory and grounded in unfounded assumptions. In the next chapter I will proceed to give a radically different view of the truth and reality of our existence which I shall call the Soul-centred view of reality, for it is the understanding of truth and reality from the perspective of oneself as the Soul. This will naturally involve an overview of the Spiritual universe, for the Soul and the Spiritual universe share a very intimate relationship. Indeed truth, reality, the Soul and the Spiritual universe are very intimately related, and we *cannot* deeply and fully comprehend one without the others. In a further chapter I will provide some key insights as to why we have fallen into the ego-centred view of reality and are unaware of our Spiritual nature and that of the universe. In the final chapter of the prelude to this book I will provide a brief overview of what it means for us to follow the way of truth and reality. These four chapters will then serve as the wider context to more easily and fully understand the short passages on the way of truth and reality which comprise the majority of this book.

Most of us believe, fully or in large part, that we are an ego, an individual entity, which is in *some* way unchanging or always the same. Basically, the ego is a personality structure associated with a self-image which corresponds to the personality, and where all of this is constellated around a sense or knowing of 'I' or 'I'-ness. As such, we believe that we are located inside, and are dependent upon, a material or physical brain and body of three, fixed spatial dimensions. Further still, we believe that the body is located in an external and independently existing world; that this world is essentially matter and populated by material objects; and that the world and its objects are characterised by space of three fixed dimensions, by time as an independently existing continuum of fixed rate and direction, and by causation where the existence of events or experiences is necessarily determined by prior events or experiences. This is what I shall call the ego-centred view of reality, and for many of us this is what we consider to be true and real. But, what is our *actual* experience?

When we closely observe our experiences it becomes self-evident that *at the level of finite or limited experiences* there is only an ever-changing flow or

succession of thoughts, beliefs, emotions, aspirations, desires, needs, sense perceptions, memories and imaginings.¹ This constant flow of conscious states is our *actual* experience, therefore, our belief in and experience of the ego-centred view of reality (just outlined), and which is not this actual experience, exists for us *only in the mind and imagination*. This is truly amazing: that all that we actually experience is an ongoing succession of finite or particular experiences or states, and yet what we believe and imagine is that we are a permanent or unchanging ego located inside a physical brain and body, in turn located in an external, self-sufficient and material world set in fixed, three-dimensional space, unfolding in time, and governed by causation. What we are actually experiencing and what we believe and imagine we are experiencing are two vastly different things. Basically, what has occurred here is that as we have matured from infants into adults we have constructed, in the mind and imagination and for the most part unconsciously, and from out of our ever-changing flow of our conscious experiences or states, our so-called reality. I would like to examine in turn, two fundamental elements of the ego-centred view of reality: the existence of a physical world which is external to and independent of our awareness; and the existence of oneself as the ego.

Of course, most of us believe that there is a physical world out there, existing and operating as we believe. But how can we know this? We must *infer* this conclusion from our flow of finite and conscious experiences. But how many of us have done that? The truth is that most of us have more or less simply *assumed* that the external and physical world exists. Alternatively, the fundamental reason given or adduced for why the physical world exists, is that it must be present to create or cause our consciousness or awareness and its experiences. Such an argument *assumes* that the concept of causation is itself a truth and reality—something which itself is highly questionable—indeed quantum physics has dispensed with the concept. But for now, let us put this question aside and briefly consider whether the physical world, in particular, matter, *is* the cause of consciousness or awareness.

It is commonly believed that our consciousness or awareness is not only caused by but is a product of matter, in particular the brain. Science is uncertain as to the nature of matter. It is commonly believed by both the scientific and general community that matter is composed of spatial particles or waves which have a self-sufficient existence and which, themselves, lack awareness. If we define matter as such then we find that awareness or consciousness *cannot* come from matter. First, awareness along with its qualities such as truth, virtue, love, beauty and joy, is *self-evidently* greater than matter which, by definition, is not awareness, and therefore does not and cannot possess these qualities which require awareness to exist. But, the greater, awareness and its qualities, cannot come from the lesser, matter, for this is tantamount to something coming from nothing, which is not possible. Second, matter itself is not awareness but *other* than awareness. However, something cannot come from that which is *other*, for there is nothing of the supposed product to be found in the supposed source. Just as white cannot come from black where black is other than white, awareness cannot come from matter where matter is other than awareness. Likewise, moving in the opposite direction, awareness could never convert or transform itself into matter. (We may suppose

¹ When describing our experiences, the words ‘finite’, ‘limited’ or ‘particular’ are all synonyms. They mean that an experience has more or less defined and measurable characteristics.

that such a thing occurs at the time of death.) Third, matter is spatial, yet most states or experiences of awareness have no spatial dimensions, and therefore, cannot be composed of matter. For the same reason, awareness cannot be a transformation or form of matter which *really* means that awareness is some sort of rearrangement of the essential spatial particles or waves which compose matter. Finally, we must ask ‘How is matter to produce awareness?’ Ultimately, the only answer is that ‘It does so through the collision of its particles.’ But, based on all empirical evidence—as opposed to assumptions—the collision of material particles, regardless of size, will only ever result in their modification, their breaking down or building up, or their increase or decrease in number. How can the clashing together of minute material particles ever produce awareness any more than the clashing together of larger clumps of matter such as rocks or metals, when all material particles, regardless of size, are essentially the same stuff? Such collisions and movements will never cause awareness, that is, they will never cause you or I. In sum, we see here that the argument that the physical world, in particular a material brain, exists because it is required to produce awareness or consciousness is incorrect.

We may proceed a little further with this line of argument. As previously stated, it is part of the conventional view of reality, or what I have called the ego-centred view of reality, that consciousness or awareness is located inside the brain. But, we may ask, ‘How can conscious experiences be located inside the space of the brain when most of them have no spatial dimensions by which to be located or placed or positioned in the space of the brain?’ If I asked you to place a non-spatial emotion or need in the brain, could it be accomplished? Non-spatial conscious states cannot exist inside a three dimensional brain, for they have no spatial dimensions by which to be located in the space of the brain. If they were located inside the brain these states would necessarily be spatial—but they are not. More generally, by definition, the non-spatial cannot be located within the spatial. Non-spatial states of consciousness cannot be located and found anywhere in space. What this means is that our awareness or consciousness, at least in so far as it exists without spatial dimensions, does not exist in a spatial world. Moreover, this means that there is no material and therefore spatial world—including a brain—exterior to and encompassing our awareness or consciousness. That we are living in a physical world extended in three-dimensional space is actually, simply, a delusory and illusory position.

Let us now turn to the other fundamental element of the ego-centred view of reality, namely, that one is an ego. Most of us most of the time, if not consciously then subconsciously, are identified with or take ourselves to be the ego. This is to say that you or I take ourselves to be a personality structure—as a set of characteristics or capacities such as being loving, angry, intelligent, bad, strong, stubborn, virtuous, humorous, courageous, kind, compassionate, and so on—associated with a self-image which corresponds to the personality, and where all of this is constellated around a sense or knowing of ‘I’ or ‘I’-ness. Further, we believe that as the ego we have, to some extent at least, a permanent or unchanging existence—in some way, one is always oneself. However, again, our starting point must be that *at the level of finite or limited experiences* there is only an ever-changing flow or succession of thoughts, beliefs, emotions, aspirations, desires, needs, sense perceptions, memories and imaginings. Here, at the level of our finite

experiences, there is nothing permanent or unchanging. When we look for the permanent or unchanging ego, instead, we find only a flux of experiences. Even the sense or knowing of being an 'I', of 'I'-ness, which is the core of the ego, is found, upon close observation to be intermittent—sometimes present in awareness but often not. Therefore, if we are in some way always the same, unchanged, we cannot be the ego. Further, when we take ourselves to be the ego we are saying that we are some of our experiences—those of the 'I', the personality, and the self-image—but not others. In short, we are saying that we are a *selection* of some of our experiences. However, we are always present to *all* of our experiences, even those experiences which do not constitute the ego. For example, we will be present to a physical pain or a sense perception or to a passage of music which temporarily and *fully* occupies our awareness. These conscious states are *not* regarded as aspects of the ego, and therefore, when these states *fully* occupy our awareness the ego is *not* present. However, in some way we are indeed *fully* present during these and similar non-ego experiences—which occur quite often. We are present but the ego is not, again therefore, we are not the ego. Even more acutely: the 'I' thought, the sense or knowing of 'I'-ness, which is the *core* of the ego, is often not present in awareness, but we are. Again, we are not the ego. Our simple and overall conclusion is that we are not the ego. Again, like our belief that we live in a physical world, our belief that we are the ego is a delusion and illusion. We shall see later that the ego is part of our Self- or Soul-expression.

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3. An Overview of Truth and Reality: The Individual Soul's Relation to the Spiritual Universe

Again then, what is the truth and reality of existence, including ourselves? We may begin with the self-evident truth that oneself is consciousness or awareness, for take this away and you or I simply will not be. Next, we may add the self-evident truth that oneself, as awareness, is in *some* way always the same or unchanging. Despite the many changes a person undergoes, who will deny that he or she is not in *some* way the same individual of yesterday, last year or even as a child? What is this unchanging element or self? We may return to another self-evident observation: that *at the level of finite or limited experiences* there is only an ever-changing flow or succession of thoughts, beliefs, emotions, aspirations, desires, needs, sense perceptions, memories and imaginings. However, although our experiences are always changing, *self-evidently* there is a common or unchanging element to any and all of our particular or limited experiences but which is not itself particular or limited, what we may call awareness itself or awareness *per se*. It is this unchanging and non-particular or dimensionless Awareness that you and I are.²

² When terms such as 'Awareness', 'Soul', 'Spirit' and 'Reality' are given capitals, this is to show that they denote a reality which has no finite or limited dimensions.

This conclusion may be illustrated and further affirmed through a simple example. Self-evidently, in some way you are always the same you. This is so even when in one moment a particular or limited experience occupies awareness, and in the next moment another *totally different* experience occupies awareness. For example, you experience that a perception of black and only black (or some other colour) changes to a perception of white (or another colour) and only that colour. However, it is *self-evident* that despite this change of aware or conscious states, in some way you remain unchanged—the same you was present with the first conscious state, blackness, and the second, whiteness. You are exactly the same or unchanged in these two moments, with these two experiences or conscious states. However, the two experiences or conscious states, in terms of their particular or limited dimensions, are completely different, where they have nothing in common or unchanged. Therefore, in terms of their particular or limited dimensions, you, as that which is the same or unchanged, cannot be these differing and changing conscious states. But what is left? Only Awareness *itself*, that which is common and unchanging to these two particular or limited experiences—and indeed, common to *all* of your limited or particular and changing experiences—but which itself is not particular or limited. This common or unchanging and dimensionless Awareness is the You which is observing these limited or particular and changing experiences, and indeed, observing all of your limited and changing experiences.

With regard to all of our changing and particular experiences we can directly and self-evidently experience that there is an awareness which is common or unchanging to them all but which is, itself, not particular or limited in any way—it is without dimensions. Being unchanging this awareness is timeless, and being non-particular or non-limited this awareness is spaceless. By its very nature we cannot describe or point out this awareness to others, but each of us can experience it directly as the common, unchanging and dimensionless element of all of our changing experiences.

What is the truth and reality of our existence? Essentially, each of us is dimensionless (or formless or pure) Awareness, what might be called the Soul, in which our lives unfold as a succession of finite or limited or particular experiences.³ This is also the fundamental truth and reality of what is commonly called ‘Non-Duality’: that all existence is Awareness and Its expression. However, while this is a deep and correct view of our nature and of reality, it is also a somewhat simplified and incomplete view. A more detailed understanding of our Spiritual nature and Its relation to the Spiritual universe is required if we are to fully understand the truth and reality of our existence, and, to have a more adequate foundation and map for following the path of truth and reality. Such a discussion will take us beyond the realm of normal experience, and the insights, reason and logic based on that experience. Instead, we will need to rely upon the testimony of various mystics and sages. This is unsatisfactory to the intellect (reason and logic), but the heart may be open to it and, in the course of time each of us will be able to *directly experience* what is said here of our Spiritual nature and the Spiritual universe.⁴

³ When describing Awareness, the adjectives ‘dimensionless’, ‘formless’ or ‘pure’ are synonyms.

⁴ In part, the following overview of the individual Soul and Its relation to the Spiritual universe synthesizes and adapts several accounts of the nature of the Soul, in particular, accounts found in the works of I. K. Taimni, whose focus is upon a synthesis of Vedanta and Theosophy, the *Enneads* of

Essentially and ultimately the whole universe is an expression and manifestation of what may be called the The Spirit—That which is Itself beyond all finite or limited dimensions, and therefore, cannot be that which is thought or imagined. Even where thought accurately describes the nature of The Spirit, this is a description only, and not the actual experience of The Spirit. From this Divine origin the universe *spontaneously* unfolds as a series of planes or levels of existence. The first of these universal planes is the Archetypes. The Archetypes *may* be described as Beings of Consciousness or Awareness. These Beings are unchanging—eternal. The Archetypes form the fundamental pattern for the rest of the universe, and the various finite or limited forms or experiences found on the following planes of the Spiritual universe are basically a less unified and refined expression and reflection of the Archetypes. Also proceeding from The Spirit, and present with the Archetypes, is the initial phase of the Soul, what may be called the Absolute Soul. Essentially, the Absolute Soul exists as dimensionless Awareness. The Absolute Soul is our origin—It is the origin of all individual Souls including you and I.⁵ From the Absolute Soul, individual Souls come forth spontaneously to form the next plane of the universe.

When individual Souls originate or come forth from the Absolute Soul they do so as dimensionless Awareness. As such, they *cannot yet* be regarded as individuals. An individual Soul, such as you or I, is created when basically two things occur: first, the Soul spontaneously manifests a knowing and experience of being an individual; and second, this individualised Soul restricts its attention to a more or less unique group of finite experiences. For a Soul to manifest a sense of individuality and to restrict its attention to a unique group of particular experiences may be described as its “descent” into the universe. For the Soul to “enter” or “descend” into the universe basically means that finite or limited experiences, including a sense of individuality, have manifested “within” the dimensionless Awareness that the Soul essentially is, and, the Soul is restricting Its attention to those experiences.⁶ And, it will be the nature of the experiences which manifest that will determine on which plane or level of the universe the individual Soul is situated. What, essentially, *is* a level or plane of universal existence? Fundamentally, a level or plane of universal existence is nothing more, or less, than finite or particular experiences manifesting within the dimensionless Awareness of individual Souls. This is to say, that each successive plane or level of the universe which follows the Archetypes will have as its essence or foundation the dimensionless Awareness of individual Souls, and its forms will be finite or particular experiences manifesting within these Souls. As stated earlier, these finite forms or experiences are reflections of the Archetypes. Our so-called physical world and existence is one such universal plane. The human Soul, that is, an individual Soul associated with a human body, undergoes three phases of descent. And it is these three phases that we must describe in some detail so that we can

Plotinus, the works of Anthony Damiani whose approach is deeply grounded in the works of Plotinus and Paul Brunton, and the works of the contemporary spiritual teacher and founder of the Diamond Approach, A. H. Almaas. For the following overview I am indebted to these and other teachings.

⁵ An individual Soul is any Soul that has a knowing of being an individual.

⁶ Whenever a word appears in double quotation marks, it means that it is being used in a non-literal manner. For example, the Soul does *not* spatially “enter” or “descend” into the universe, rather, finite experiences are appearing to the dimensionless Awareness which the Soul essentially is.

more fully understand our Spiritual nature as a prelude to more fully understanding the truth and reality of our existence.

The first descent of the individual Soul occurs when it originates from the Absolute Soul by becoming aware of Its Individuality or Individualness. Individuality may be regarded as the first expression or manifestation from and “within” the Soul as formless Awareness. Individuality may be described as the formless Awareness which is the Soul but now formed or qualified, and knowing Itself as, an Individual. Further, just as the Soul as formless Awareness Knows Itself by Being Itself, so too the Soul as Individualised Awareness Knows Itself by Being Itself. To be clear, the Soul now has two *simultaneous* levels of Being and Knowing: as formless Awareness and, as this same Awareness now qualified and knowing Itself as an Individual. These two levels of Being are so closely united that the Soul *simultaneously apprehends* that It is both formless and Individualised Awareness. The Individuality, at this deep level of the Soul, is eternal, unchanging.

We may jump ahead a little here. It is this Individuality, so closely united with the Soul as formless Awareness, which is the *ground* or source of our familiar, everyday knowing of being a precious individual. Our ordinary and everyday knowing of being an ‘I’ is a *reflected* and *muted* expression of the Individuality; and this is why our normal sense of ‘I’ is experienced as precious. When the Soul unfolds its potentialities and becomes a human this ordinary sense or knowing of being an ‘I’ is usually and *mistakenly* attributed to a personality structure, and maybe the body. Further, this composite of a personality and body, with the ‘I’ at its core, what is commonly called the ego, is usually mistaken to be oneself. However, the truth is that we are not the ego. We are not even the individual or ‘I’ in its reflected form at the core of the ego. We *are* the Individual which is intimately associated with formless Awareness; and more deeply still, we are essentially formless Awareness.⁷

Let us return to the main line of our discussion. There is one more level of complexity to this first phase of the individual Soul: manifesting “within” each individual Soul is Its own unique and changeless Vision of the Archetypes. This Vision is a manifestation in the individual Soul of *some* of the Archetypes. It is this unique Archetypal Vision which is the blueprint of each individual Soul’s *unique* destiny which it will gradually unfold and evolve in the lower planes of the universe. To be clear, upon this plane (following the Archetypes and Absolute Soul) the individual Soul exists and knows Itself as dimensionless Awareness and, simultaneously, as an Individual Awareness “in” which a unique Vision of the Archetypes manifests. This first phase of the individual Soul, with Its triple nature of formless or dimensionless Awareness, Individualness, and Archetypal Vision, may be called the Higher Soul.

Before leaving the Higher Soul I would briefly like to discuss the Qualities of the Soul, for they play an important role in the path of truth and reality and,

⁷ The Individual or Individualised Soul is recognised in a number of Spiritual teachings and traditions. In Vedanta and more broadly Hinduism it is called the *Atma* or *Asmita*, in the Western tradition Plotinus calls it the Intelligible Soul—although this position needs some qualification—whereas A. H. Almaas calls it The Point or Essential Self. (Of course, terminology can be “slippery” and we must always be careful in comparing terms from different traditions.) In particular, this description of the Individual Soul draws upon the writings of A.H. Almaas, while making no claim to *accurately* represent his teachings.

more generally, in the Spiritual life. The Qualities of the Soul include but are not restricted to: Reality, Truth, Immortality, Individuality, Value, Love, Joy, Peace, Power and Beauty. The Qualities of the Soul are of two kinds: they are inherent to the nature of the Soul as dimensionless Awareness; or, they are implicit in the Soul as dimensionless Awareness and come forth as *initial* expressions or manifestations of this Soul. Some Qualities have both aspects. For example, as we shall see in due course, the Higher Soul as dimensionless Awareness may be regarded as being Truth and Reality; whereas Love and Joy are initial *expressions* of this Soul. From one perspective the latter category, the *expressed* Qualities of the Soul, can be regarded as explicit manifestations of Its formerly hidden or implicit potentials. From another perspective these expressed Qualities are reflections of some of the Archetypes manifesting “within” the Soul, and where these Qualities form *part* of the Higher Soul’s unique Vision of the Archetypes. Both perspectives are correct. We have already discussed the first Quality which manifests “within” the Soul—Its Individuality or Individualness. This Individualness is part of the Higher Soul’s Vision of the Archetypes and serves as the “container” or nucleus for the rest of that Vision. Each of the expressed Qualities of the Soul shares a very intimate relationship with the dimensionless Awareness from which they arise and “in” which they appear. The nature of this relationship is *precisely* like that between the Soul and Its Quality of Individualness described above. Such is the closeness between the Soul as formless Awareness and Its Qualities, it *may* be said, paradoxically, that the Soul as formless Awareness *is* Its Qualities, or that the Soul as the Qualities *is* formless Awareness—each Quality may be considered to *be* the Soul as dimensionless Awareness.⁸

The second descent of the individual Soul is when It becomes aware of those finite or limited experiences which constitute the world and life of what may be referred to as the Higher Self. Fundamentally, what is occurring here is that the individual Soul is giving “part” of the dimensionless Awareness which It essentially is, to the finite experiences which constitute the life and world of the Higher Self.⁹ The Higher Self resides on that universal plane which is sometimes called the causal plane or higher mental plane. The Higher Self is the intermediary between the Higher Soul “above” and us “below” in the so-called physical world. Like Its human counterpart, us, Higher Self has an ego or personality and a body by which it participates in Its life on the causal plane of the universe. Immediately, it must be added that the body and personality of the Higher Self are vastly more refined and differently evolved in nature than those of the human being. Again like the human being, the Higher Self is in the process of developing, and each Higher Self is more or less developed or evolved. The Higher Self develops by receiving from the Higher Soul above, the human being below, and through interaction on Its own plane of existence. The more developed It is, the more the Higher Self will receive from and be guided by the Higher Soul. The Higher Self is the *immediate* cause and creator of the human being. The manner in which It does this may be described in different degrees of detail, but essentially the Higher Self is giving

⁸ In this work, when the term ‘Qualities’ appears with a capital, it refers to the Qualities as they exist with or as the Higher Soul. As we shall see later, the Higher *Self* and we, as the human being, can be more or less receptive to and experience these Qualities.

⁹ Again, whenever a word appears in double quotation marks, it means that it is being used in a non-literal manner. For example, as formless Awareness the Soul cannot have spatial parts.

“part” of the formless Awareness which It essentially is, to be aware of a constellation of experiences comprising a human life. Each Higher Self creates many, many human lives *in succession*—what is normally called reincarnation. It does so as part of the fulfillment of the unique destiny of the individual Soul (the blueprint of which is the Vision of the Archetypes contemplated by the Higher Soul). During each human life or incarnation, and after each life, the Higher Self distills and stores the essences, the essential learning and experiences, of that life. In this way the Higher Self adds to Its development. During our lives, you and I receive guidance, wisdom, and other forms of grace from the Higher Self, including from Its stored repository of experiences and lessons.

The final descent and phase of the individual Soul is as the human being or what may be called the lower self. Essentially, for the individual Soul to become, or to be born as, a human being means that the Soul as dimensionless Awareness has given “part” of Itself to become aware of the experiences which constitute life “in” the physical world. Essentially then, you and I are formless Awareness, and in this Awareness the so-called physical world manifests as finite or limited experiences. In particular, the world, including the body, appears as a series or succession of experiences that we call sense perceptions. More widely, our life in this “physical” world is constituted of a succession of sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, needs, desires, aspirations, memories and imaginings. As stated before, this is our *actual* experience of life. Also as stated before, as we mature from infants into adults it is from out of this flow of experiences that we construct and create, in the mind and imagination, and for the most part unconsciously, our conventional or ego-centred view of reality characterised by the self as the ego, materiality, three-dimensional space, linear time, and causation. However, the truth and reality of our existence, here and now, is that we are each a Divine Soul, pure Awareness, in which our experiences are continuously arising and disappearing. And further, as such a Soul or Spiritual Being we each have three *simultaneously existing* phases which reach to almost the entire height or depth of the Spiritual universe. We have now come the full circle, beginning and ending with our experiences unfolding in Awareness, but now viewed from a vastly different perspective—that of the Soul.

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4. The Fall into Delusion and Illusion

What is the truth and reality of our existence? A fundamental part of this truth and reality is that each of us exists as pure or dimensionless Awareness, a Soul, in which finite or particular experiences are arising and dissolving. This truth and reality is commonly called Non-Duality. However, this is *not* the normal experience of most people. Instead, most of us are more or less identified with the ego, and possibly the body, where we have no understanding or deep experience of being dimensionless or formless Awareness. Further still, we believe that we are located inside a body which, in turn, is located in an external and independently existing world populated by material objects characterised by space of three, fixed dimensions, time moving at a fixed rate and direction, and by causation. This is the

ego-centred view of reality. How has this situation come about, for it is nothing less than the loss of the truth and reality of ourselves and our world, and, to have become lost in delusion and illusion? The *full* answer to such a question would be both complex and lengthy. Here, I will confine myself to *some* of the key processes and occurrences in this process.

As stated at the end of the previous chapter, for the individual Soul to become, or to be born as, a human being basically means that the Soul has given “part” of the formless Awareness, which It essentially is, to become aware of the experiences which constitute life “in” the physical world. These experiences appear as a succession of sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, needs, desires, aspirations, memories and imaginings. When we are first born into this world we are *more or less* aware of ourselves as the Soul as pure or formless Awareness, and also, as some of the Qualities of the Soul including that of Individuality—that is, we are more or less aware of our deeper Spiritual nature. However, we initially lack the cognitive capacity or knowing power to recognise ourselves as such. This is to say, that we have not yet developed the capacity of abstract thinking to be self-reflective. For example, as infants we experience the Quality of Love but without recognizing, through abstract reflection, that it is Love or that we *are* Love inseparable from the Soul. However, as we mature we lose awareness of our true nature as the Soul and Its Qualities. This occurs for everyone because part of our natural way of relating to our experiences as a growing child is to shun our painful experiences and to attach or “cling” to our pleasurable experiences. In the absence of sufficient cognitive or knowing capacity this is a primary way we initially relate to our experiences. The more we attach to our finite or limited experiences, the more we shut out or exclude the awareness of our true nature as the Soul. Herein lies a fundamental Spiritual principle or law: it is our attachments to finite or limited experiences which exclude our full awareness and realisation of the Soul and Its Qualities; whereas the release or surrender of our attachments allows our greater awareness and realisation of the Soul and Its Qualities. Gradually then, we lose our initial awareness of ourselves as the Soul and Its Qualities. Instead, we are now *only* aware of the finite experiences of the world and our lives. We have now lost touch with our Soul, with our depth as formless Awareness, and with the Qualities of the Soul, and are now only aware of the surface of existence—the finite and limited experiences of this world and life. It is from these finite and limited experiences that we will progressively construct our ego-centred “reality”.

Coinciding with this progressive loss of experiencing the Soul and Its Qualities, and being reduced to awareness of finite or limited experiences, there is the *increasing* knowing of oneself as an individual through self-reflection. There are actually two factors at play here. First, in childhood we have a feeling or sense of ‘I-ness’ or individualness which is actually the *now muted reflection* of the Quality of Individualness. As stated, as infants we are born with some awareness of ourselves as the Soul as formless Awareness and Its Qualities, including that of Individuality. As we mature, due to our attachments, we progressively lose direct awareness of ourselves as such. However, we continue to experience the Quality of Individuality in a *reflected* and *muted* way as our *normal* sense or knowing of ‘I’ or ‘I’-ness. Second, due to our increasing capacity for abstract thought as we mature into adults, we develop the increasing capacity to be self-reflective. However, by the time we can self-reflectively recognise ourselves as an individual, due to our

attachments we have *lost* the direct experience of being the Soul and Its Qualities, including that of Individuality. Consequently, we naturally take ourselves to be what is left, the normal sense of ‘I’ or ‘I’-ness—which, as stated, is a muted reflection of the Quality of Individualness—and what naturally becomes associated with and mixed up with the ‘I’, namely, the personality structure, its corresponding self-image, and the body. This composite is the ego. Most of us, most of the time take the ego to be one’s true self. But this is a delusion and an illusion. This has been shown, in particular, in the last paragraph of section two above.¹⁰

Along with development of our mistaken and illusory sense of self as the ego and the body, we are simultaneously developing the rest of our mistaken and illusory view of the world. How this occurs is a complex process. Again, I will confine myself to some essential details. We have seen that as we mature from infants we progressively lose our initial experience of being pure Awareness, or the Soul, and Its Qualities. This loss is due to our increasing attachments to our finite experiences including, eventually, the ego and the body. As we lose our experience of being the Soul and Its Qualities we are left with only our finite or particular experiences. As we mature from infants, it is from out of these experiences that we will gradually, and for the most part unconsciously, construct the remainder of the ego-centred view of reality where: the ego is located inside a physical body in turn located in an external and independently existing world; where this world is essentially matter and populated by material objects; and where this world is characterised by three-dimensional space, linear time and by causation. We believe and experience that we are living in such a reality, and yet, we are only and actually experiencing a succession of finite experiences in awareness. Indisputably then, this so-called reality is a *creative* product of the mind and imagination working with these finite experiences. Essentially, the mind and imagination do this in the following manner.

It is clear that our experiences are associated and unfold in consistent, often very consistent, ways. This enables us to *assume and imagine* things about the nature or reality of these experiences. These assumptions and imaginings are in accord with our future experiences which generally continue to be associated and to unfold in the same consistent ways. Consequently, our assumptions and imaginings are progressively “confirmed” as true, and the world they speak of as real. This mind-and-imagination-made reality will then be projected onto, and mixed up with, our actual experiences. And, it is this *mixture* of our actual experiences with our delusions and illusions which we mistakenly believe and experience to be reality. I will illustrate the process outlined in this paragraph by using four major examples pertaining to four elements of the ego-centred view of reality, namely, the existence of three-dimensional space, the existence of causation, the self-sufficiency of objects independent of awareness, and the existence of matter. These examples are brief, but they give some insight into, and some “feel” for, what is occurring as we construct the ego-centred view of reality.

Our lives in this world are unfolding as a succession of experiences in awareness. Therefore, our experience of space is nothing other than spatial images in awareness—those images which we commonly call ‘visual perceptions’ and

¹⁰ I am indebted to the writings of A. H. Almaas, in particular his work *The Point of Existence: Transformations of Narcissism in Self-Realization*, for some of the key points in the last two paragraphs. Again, I make no claim to *accurately* represent his positions.

those images of the imagination based on them. When we reflect closely upon these images we find that they are actually and only two-dimensional, for each of these images can be fully and accurately copied or reflected onto a two-dimensional surface such as a mirror. However, because our experiences, in particular, our visual perceptions, are associated and unfold in very consistent ways, the imagination can and does construct these images into three-dimensional objects. For example, if I see enough two-dimensional images of my body or a tree, at some point I can, using the imagination, construct them into three-dimensional objects. Progressively then, the imagination builds up a three-dimensional view of reality and projects it onto our actual experiences. At some point it is assumed that such three-dimensional objects *are* actually part of reality. When our ongoing experiences are consistent with this assumption of three-dimensional space and objects, and consistent with our imagined view of the world as three-dimensional, then three-dimensional space is “confirmed” to be part of reality.

Let us turn next to the belief in causation. As I have frequently stated, our lives in this world are actually an unfolding succession of finite experiences in awareness. Many of these experiences unfold in very consistent ways, in particular, we find that some experiences are always or consistently and immediately associated with and succeeded by others. At some point this gives rise to the assumption that one experience is the necessary determinant, or cause of, the one that follows. When further experiences do not contradict this assumption we gradually take the belief in causation to be true, and, we believe that our world is ruled by causation. In actuality, there is only consistency and immediacy of association and succession of experiences. Here, the dream analogy may assist. In a dream I may imagine that my body runs into a tree and causes me pain. Did my body hit the tree to cause the pain? No. The dream is only a succession of experiences unfolding in my imagination. There is no causality between the tree, my body and the pain. Even if the sequence of experiences or ideas were repeated, even if this sequence consistently happened, still, there would be no causation. Instead, all we can say is that one imagined experience was followed by another. In *principle*, the same is true of the flow of experiences of our waking lives, namely, that we simply have one experience following another in awareness.

Once we have assumed the existence of three-dimensional objects and causation we can easily assume the existence of a world which exists independently of our awareness of it. For example, I assume that a group of sense perceptions constitute a three-dimensional object such as a tree. I also assume that this “object” is causing me to have certain tactile sensations, for such sensations are always associated with this “object”. Next, I close my eyes so that I cannot see the tree. However, I continue to feel similar tactile sensations, therefore, I assume that the tree continues to exist, even though I am not aware of it, to be able to cause those sensations. In this, and other ways, I come to believe in, assume, the self-sufficient existence of objects outside of my awareness of them. When future experiences do not contradict my assumption then it is taken to be true, and the self-sufficient existence of objects, and more generally of the world, is taken to be part of reality.

Finally, let us consider the existence of matter. Despite the truth that we only ever experience awareness and its experiences, we may also believe that we exist in a material world. How has this come about? There are a number of reasons,

of which I will only describe one. Once we assume that there are three-dimensional objects which exist independently of awareness we can also assume that they are made of something. Again, due to the strict consistency in which our experiences, in particular our sense perceptions, unfold, apparently three-dimensional objects can also apparently be broken down into smaller and smaller three-dimensional parts (or objects). We assume that there is some sort of limit to how far these parts can be broken down, and these smallest particles we call 'matter'. However, again, we must not forget that these smaller and smaller parts or particles are three-dimensional objects which we are constructing, in the imagination, from the succession of our conscious, not material, experiences. Again, the mind and imagination are able to do this because of the strict consistency with which these conscious states are associated and unfold. However, we are no more experiencing actual three-dimensional objects and their smaller three-dimensional parts, including matter, than we experience them in a dream.

The above examples, though brief, give us some insights into how our mind and imagination work upon our experiences to gradually build up our ego-centred view of reality. For the most part this occurs at an unconscious level as we mature from infants into adults. Thus, we come to believe in and experience a "reality" which is largely of our own making. We come to participate in a "reality" which is a mix of our actual experiences mixed with our own mis-beliefs and imaginings, or delusions and illusions. It is also a "reality" devoid of the deeper experience of ourselves as the Soul, or dimensionless Awareness, and Its Qualities. As we develop from infants a combined process is occurring. We are forming attachments to some of our experiences and as we do so, we are losing our experience of being the Soul and Its Qualities. Simultaneously, our mind and imagination are working with our remaining finite experiences to develop a series of erroneous assumptions or delusions about these experiences, and associated false imaginings or illusions about these finite experiences. Thus, we gradually bring about a limited, wrong and distorted view and experience of what actually is or of reality. Believing that we are the ego and the body, and that the world we have created is reality, we naturally cling or attach to them, and to all that support them. As our attachments multiply and intensify we further shut out the deeper experiences of the Soul and Its Qualities. To a great extent the way of truth and reality is to consciously and deliberately free our experience from the subjective or individual matrix of delusions, illusions and attachments which we are imposing on it, so that we may experience, without distortion or limitation, what actually is, reality, including our own Spiritual nature as the Soul. And it is to a description of this path that we shall now turn.

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5. The Way of Truth and Reality

To reiterate, to a great extent the way of truth and reality is to consciously and deliberately free our experiences from the subjective or individual matrix of delusions, illusions and attachments which we are imposing on them, so that we may experience, without distortion or limitation, what actually is, reality, including

our own Spiritual nature as the Soul. In its entirety, this reality is no less than the Spiritual universe with which the individual Soul shares an intimate and inseparable relation. To know reality we must clear away our delusions, illusions and attachments. We do this through deepening into truth, for it is truth which dissolves delusions and illusions and the attachments which they support. *How shall we do this?* There are four modes of knowing the truth of our experiences: as insights arising spontaneously from direct experience; through intuition; through reason, and through knowing-by-being. Let us consider each in turn. But, before doing so I will tersely state and define what I mean by reality and truth. Reality may be defined as what actually is, the actual nature of existence, and not as that which is wrongly believed and imagined to be the actual nature of existence. Truth may be defined as the absolutely accurate, certain, complete and unchanging knowing of what actually is, reality, or part (an aspect) of reality. Conversely, non-truth may be defined as that which is *not* the absolutely accurate certain, complete and unchanging knowing of reality or part of reality.

Our first way of knowing the truth then, is that we have the capacity for truths about our experiences where these truths are insights arising spontaneously from these experiences. For example, the truth that there is existence or being arises spontaneously from our direct experiences. Likewise, we spontaneously recognise that one finite experience has a character which is to some degree different from another; that experiences change or alter; that one finite experience is larger or smaller than another; that an experience is one and not two or more; that an experience is composed of parts; that an experience is a memory; that a group of experiences are all examples of one idea or concept; and so on. At least some of these are true insights, that is, they are absolutely accurate, uncertain, unchanging and complete.

Next, we have the capacity for intuition. An intuition is where we have a spontaneous insight about the nature or meaning of our experiences, for example: that a consistent relation exists between the way certain experiences unfold—so much so that it might be called a law; or we grasp the reason for why we are upset about a situation; or we discern what is the most productive course in a situation; or we discern that one experience or course is better than another, for, example, that love is better than hate. Again, at least some of our intuitions are true.

Next, we have the capacity for reason. Reason is the faculty or power of deliberate thinking which generates new *conceptual* truths regarding the nature of our experiences, their being and laws. Reason must be distinguished from logic. Logic is the power to infer or deduce conclusions from a set of existing or *old* propositions or premises. The truth of a logical conclusion depends, in part, on the propositions with which it begins. We may regard reason as a *purely* deliberate process. However, close observation reveals that the new insights—as opposed to logical deductions—which occur when we are reasoning are also spontaneous—they are ‘aha’ moments, although they are given in response to our prior and deliberate thought. In this sense, reason and intuition overlap. Sometimes it is declared that reason cannot ascertain the truth. But we must differentiate between the capacity of reason to ascertain the truth and, our capacity to use reason. Reason *is able* to ascertain the truth—where truth is that knowing which is absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete—provided that our capacity to reason is *sufficiently* developed. However, there are three important limits to the extent

and nature of the truth which reason can attain. First, if reason has insufficient or unclear experiences with which to work it cannot ascertain firm conclusions. Second, a finding or truth of reason may be subject to change as the set of experiences upon which it is based is enlarged. This is a relative truth. With few or any exceptions science is a domain of relative truths. Relative truths are not fixed or absolute but changeable, or potentially so, and therefore, our knowing of them is uncertain. As changeable and uncertain they are, actually, not truths. However reason can also ascertain absolute or unchanging truths about our experiences: these are truths which are supported by both present and *all possible* experiences. For example, the truth that *all* of our experiences occur through or as awareness will never be altered, but only affirmed, by every new experience, for any experience requires awareness. Another example: the dimensions of the time and space which we *experience* are dependent on the nature of the finite forms in awareness, therefore, if these finite forms in awareness change, so too the dimensions of time and space which we experience. Third, reason can only give us truths of a certain kind or nature: reason gives us the truth in concepts or thoughts *about* or *describing* the nature of experience, but it does not give us the truth which comes from *having* or *being* the experience *itself*—much the same as the thought or concept of honey is not the knowing which comes from the direct experience or taste of honey. Perhaps the ultimate example here is that reason can tell us that we exist as a changeless or timeless and spaceless or infinite Awareness—where it truthfully tells us something about this experience—but it cannot give us the knowing and truth of Awareness which comes from the direct experience of It. In so far as our truth *is* concepts or thoughts *about* or *describing* an experience and not the experience itself, this is still not the truth of the experience itself. This can only come when one knows the experience by *being* it. But, truth through experiencing, or truth-by-being or knowing-by-being, is not the domain of reason.

The final modality by which may know the truth is knowing-by-being. Knowing-by-being is where we know what actually is, reality, or part of it, by *being* it. When we know something by being it we have the absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete knowing of its nature, that is, we have truth. We have seen that essentially, each of us is dimensionless Awareness in which our lives unfold as a succession of finite or particular experiences. Indeed, this is the essential nature of existence of the whole Spiritual universe *following* the Archetypes. *We already exist as this reality, however, because of our attachments to finite experiences and our superimposition of delusions and illusions, we are unaware, or not fully aware, of this reality, the knowing of which is truth.*¹¹ Instead, we live in a “reality” which is devoid of the experience of dimensionless Awareness and which is largely constructed of delusions and illusions superimposed onto existence, onto what actually is, onto reality. For example, instead of our finite experiences being known as inseparable from dimensionless Awareness, we mistake many of them for three-dimensional material objects, external and independent to the awareness that we are. How then are we to know something through being it? As we progressively receive truthful insights—through direct experience, intuition and reason—*and live accordingly*, we re-experience what is, reality, *free* of delusions and illusions and the attachments they

¹¹ To simply my discussion somewhat, for the remainder of this introduction I will focus on knowing the reality which is that part of the Spiritual universe *following* the Archetypes.

support. That is, we progressively re-experience ourselves as dimensionless Awareness in which finite experiences appear, without unconsciously imposing our delusions, illusions and attachments. This is also to say that we do not unconsciously superimpose any thoughts, memories or imaginings onto what actually is, reality, and *mistake* these for reality. Here, we no longer experience reality indirectly through a mind-made and distorting filter of delusions and illusions. *When there is no imposition of delusions and illusions, and the attachments they support, there is simply knowing-by-being of what actually is, reality.* And, when we know something by being it we have the absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete knowing of its nature, that is, we have truth. Here, we know what is, reality, by being it. Here knowing or truth and being or reality coincide, or are one and the same.

We may discern two *fundamental* aspects to this knowing-by-being of reality. The first aspect is where the Soul as dimensionless Awareness Knows the Truth of Itself as this Awareness simply by Being this Awareness *free* of delusions, illusions and attachments. Here the Soul Knows the Truth of Itself, Its Reality, simply by Being Itself. Here Knowing or Truth, and Being or Reality, are one and the same. The second aspect of the knowing-by-being of reality is where we know the truth of our finite or particular experiences by simply *being* them free of delusions, illusions and attachments. Dimensionless Awareness *is* Its finite forms or experiences; they are not separate from It. Once that dimensionless Awareness is free of delusions, illusions and attachments, It is *simply* being Its finite experiences and knowing the truth of them, their reality, by being them. Here again, knowing or truth and reality or being are one and the same.

In precisely the same manner, that is, through using a combination of the three modalities of truth—namely, insights gained through direct experience, intuition and reason—leading to knowing-by-being, we can also come to know the truth of the two deeper levels of the Soul: the Higher Self and the Higher Soul. As we release and dissolve our delusions, illusions and attachments through truth, and live accordingly, we progressively open ourselves to the fuller and less distorted experiences of these deeper levels of ourselves. Ultimately, when the overlay of delusions, illusions and attachments is dissolved, we too know the truth of these deeper phases of ourselves simply by *being* Them.

So far, we have seen that truths as insights can arise spontaneously from direct experience, through intuition and through reason; that as we progressively receive and live accordingly to these truths we re-experience what is, reality, *free* of delusions and illusions and the attachments they support; whereby we finally come to know what is, reality, simply by being it; and where this reality has two fundamental aspects, namely, formless Awareness and Its finite forms. At this point we may pose a question, the answer to which is important for understanding and following the path of truth and reality: ‘What is the *origin* or ground of our truthful insights arising from direct experience, intuition and reason, and also, of those insights about our particular experiences when we know them by being them?’ The Archetypes and the Higher Soul are the *ground* of truth. Let us see how this is so.¹²

¹² In part, the following account of the origin or ground of knowledge as it relates to the Archetypes draws upon some central ideas found in the *Enneads* of Plotinus, and the works of Anthony Damiani which are deeply grounded in the *Enneads*.

As discussed in an earlier chapter, the Archetypes are the initial and immediate expression of The Spirit, the source of all existence. Speaking *somewhat loosely* but in a way which gives us some comprehension, the Archetypes may be regarded as Beings of Awareness. These Beings are unchanging—eternal. Each Archetype is, and “embodies”, a particular Idea which serves as a foundation for, or as a principle of, manifestation for all finite experiences of that kind in the universe. Thus, all particular experiences of love in the universe are reflections of the Archetype of Love or Love Itself. Likewise, all particular instances of Beauty are reflections of the Archetype of Beauty; or all particular instances of the number one are reflections of the Archetype of Oneness. The Archetypes form the fundamental pattern for the universe, and the particular or finite experiences which, in part, constitute each plane of the Spiritual universe are *lesser* reflections and expressions of the Archetypes. The Archetypes can be regarded as the *Absolutes*, for they are both timeless or eternal or unchanging, and also infinite in quality; while their lesser and finite reflections or expressions can be regarded as Their approximations. Each successive plane of the universe following the Archetypes is, in part, constituted of finite experiences or forms which are less refined and unified expressions of the Archetypes. All of these finite experiences are manifesting within the dimensionless Awareness which is the essence of individual Souls. These finite experiences can also, in some way, and to some degree, reflect and express this dimensionless Awareness. Essentially then, a level or plane of universal existence *is nothing more, or less*, than finite or particular experiences manifesting within the dimensionless Awareness of individual Souls, where these experiences more or less reflect or express the Archetypes and the Soul. Our so-called physical world and existence is one such universal plane. Finally, we may note that the finite experiences or forms on all—but one—of the planes of universal existence following the Archetypes are, overall, *evolving* to become greater and greater approximations, reflections and expressions of the Archetypes and the Soul as formless Awareness. In this process, each individual Soul has a unique role to play—Its destiny.

With this context in mind, let us return to the question of ‘What is the *origin* or ground of our truthful insights arising from direct experience, intuition and reason, and also, of those insights about our particular experiences when we know them by being them?’ The Archetypes and the Higher Soul are Self-Knowing in that They Know Themselves simply by Being Themselves. Here, Knowing is Being. Further, this type of Knowing *is* Truth. Restated, the Soul and Archetypes Know Themselves, the Realities which They are, simply by Being Themselves, and this Knowing is Truth. Here then Knowing or Truth and Being or Reality are one and the same. In particular, the Higher Soul Knows Itself as dimensionless Awareness by Being that Awareness, and the Higher Soul Knows Its unique and changeless Vision of the Archetypes by Being that Vision. In addition to Knowing the Truth of Itself and Its Archetypal Vision, the Higher Soul can *also* know the truth of those finite experiences on the various universal planes which are “below” It. The basic manner in which this occurs is that Higher Soul can compare or relate the finite experiences of the universe to the Truth and Reality of Itself as dimensionless Awareness, and of Its Vision of the Archetypes. In doing so, the Higher Soul knows the truth of these finite experiences *relative* to Itself and Its Vision. Among these experiences will be those of the lower self or human being.

Likewise, *in a less direct way*, the Higher *Self* can compare or relate the finite experiences of the universe, including those of the human being, to the Higher Soul and, in doing so, know the truth of these finite experiences. *All of our truthful insights regarding the nature of reality are given to us by, or are reflected down to us from, the Higher Soul or the Higher Self.* As such they are a form of grace. *These are the insights or truths which we receive through direct experience, intuition, reason, or through knowing-by-being.*

Let us elaborate a little on the manner of how the Higher Soul (or Higher Self) ascertains the truth and also, provide some examples. In the manner just described, through Knowing-by-Being, the Higher Soul Knows the Truth of Itself, as dimensionless Awareness, and of Its Archetypal Vision. Using Itself and Its Archetypal Vision as a reference, the Higher Soul will know that all particular or finite experiences on the universal planes below It are partial and lesser reflections or expressions of Itself as dimensionless Awareness and of the Archetypes. In particular, the Higher Soul will know in what ways and to what degrees these particular or finite experiences reflect and express or manifest Itself as dimensionless Awareness and the Archetypes. For example, the Higher Soul will know the truth that a particular (or finite) experience is circular by comparing it to the Archetype of the Circle. For example, the Higher Soul will know the truth that a particular experience is beautiful, and to what degree it is beautiful, by comparing it to the Archetype of Beauty (or Absolute Beauty). Similarly, by comparing finite experiences to Itself and Its Vision the Higher Soul can determine the *value* or *goodness* of these experiences relative to Itself and Its Vision. In a similar way—through using Itself and Its Archetypal Vision as a reference—the Higher Soul will also know the truth of the ways, or the laws, by which finite experiences unfold as an expression of Itself and Its Vision of the Archetypes. This will include knowledge of the great laws of evolution and karma. More generally, in the same way, the Higher Soul will know the truth that the whole Spiritual universe (following Itself) is nothing more, or less, than particular or finite experiences appearing in dimensionless Awareness. Here, the Higher Soul will know that there is no matter (but only finite forms in Awareness); and that the human being is “only” formless Awareness in which finite forms—reflecting the Archetypes—appear. *In sum, the Higher Soul knows the truths of reality. We receive these truths from the Higher Soul, or Its deputy the Higher Soul, as spontaneous insights. These are the insights or truths which we receive through direct experience, intuition, reason, or through knowing-by-being.*

There is an additional way that we may receive insights or truths from the Higher Soul. As discussed, the Higher Soul Knows Its Archetypal Vision by Being It. This Knowing is Truth. When we have a finite experience which is a manifest and partial reflection of an Archetype, the Knowing of that Archetype by the Higher Soul may also be reflected down to us; this gives us the ability to truthfully know the finite experience as a distinct and unique experience. For example, when we have the experience of joy as a manifest and partial expression of the Archetype of Joy, the Knowing of this Archetype by the Higher Soul may also be reflected down to us; thus we can truthfully know the finite experience as something distinct and unique, which we call joy. Of course, all such reflected knowing would come via the Higher *Self*.

There is one type of intuitive insight which I would like to discuss in more detail, for it is integral to our understanding and treading of the way of truth and reality—this is what is commonly called the ‘conscience’. As discussed earlier, each of us has a unique destiny to fulfill as part of the evolution of the Spiritual universe. The unique and changeless Vision of the Archetypes contemplated by the Higher Soul is the blueprint for the Soul’s destiny. Each Higher Soul will progressively actualize or manifest Its unique Vision as Its contribution to the evolution of the Spiritual universe. The Higher Soul will do this through Its two lower phases, the Higher Self and lower self or human being. The work here is for these two phases of the Soul to develop their respective bodies, and powers or faculties, and to shape or create their respective worlds in those ways which are ever greater expressions of the Higher Soul’s Archetypal Vision. This work is the Soul’s fate or destiny; its “preordained” part in the universal drama. There is a further element of our destiny: we are also here to progressively realise the truth and reality of our existence including as the Higher Self and Higher Soul. Integral to the realisation of our destiny, or of what might alternatively be called Spiritual-Realisation, is the conscience. The *true* conscience is the voice of the Higher Soul—or Its deputy, the Higher Self—within us which is guiding us to live in that way which enables us to fulfill our destiny or Spiritual-Realisation. In this way, the Higher Soul is able to guide us so that our lives are increasingly an expression of Itself and Its unique Vision of the Archetypes, that is, a unique expression of Its Truth and Reality. The *true* conscience then is the voice of the Higher Soul within us, where this is an expression of Its truth or wisdom, which is guiding us to live in that way which enables us to fulfill our destiny or Spiritual-Realisation. To live according to this voice of the Soul is to live with Spiritual integrity.

I will conclude by summarizing and elaborating slightly upon what has been said in this chapter. I began this chapter by saying that to a great extent the way of truth and reality is to consciously and deliberately free our experiences from the subjective or individual matrix of delusions, illusions and attachments which we are imposing on them, so that we may experience, without distortion or limitation, what actually is, reality, including our own Spiritual nature as the Soul. In its entirety, this reality is no less than the Spiritual universe with which the individual Soul shares an intimate and inseparable relation. To know reality we must clear away our delusions, illusions and attachments, for it is this triad which, together, distort and limit our experience of reality. We do this through deepening into truth, for it is truth which dissolves delusions and illusions, and the attachments which they support. I then proceeded to describe the four modalities by which we can know the truth. Initially, the three ways or modes of knowing the truth available to us: insights arising spontaneously from our direct experience, intuition, and reason. The insights which attend all of these modes of knowing are grounded in the Archetypes and the Higher Soul.

The Archetypes and the Higher Soul are Self-Knowing: They Know the Truth of Themselves, the Reality which They are, simply by Being Themselves. Here then Knowing or Truth and Being or Reality are one and the same. In particular, the Higher Soul Knows Itself as dimensionless Awareness by Being that Awareness, and the Higher Soul Knows Its unique and changeless Vision of the Archetypes by Being that Vision. The Higher Soul can also know the truth of those particular or finite experiences on the various universal planes which are “below”

It. This occurs in two ways. The primary manner in which this occurs is that Higher Soul can compare or relate the finite experiences of the universe to the Truth and Reality of Itself as dimensionless Awareness, and Its Vision of the Archetypes. In doing so, the Higher Soul knows the truth of these finite experiences *relative* to Itself and Its Vision. All of *our* truthful insights regarding the nature of reality, its being and laws, are given to us from the Higher Soul or Its deputy the Higher Self. As such, they are a form of grace. These insights are received by us as spontaneous and truthful insights arising from direct experience, or through intuition and reason. Additionally, truthful insights regarding the distinct and unique character of our finite experiences, may also be received as reflections of the Knowing or Truth of the Higher Soul. When we have a finite experience which is a manifest and partial reflection of an Archetype, the Knowing of that Archetype by the Higher Soul may also be reflected down to us; this gives us the ability to truthfully know the finite experience as a distinct and unique experience. As we *live* according to these insights or truths—received in these two ways—in particular, as we live with integrity, we progressively dissolve our delusions and illusions, and our attachments which are grounded in them. As this dissolution occurs we increasingly experience existence as it actually is, which is to experience reality. Ultimately, we come to know reality free of delusions, illusions and attachments. When there is no imposition of delusions and illusions, and the attachments they support, there is simply knowing-by-being of what actually is, reality. And, when we know something by being it we have the absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete knowing of its nature, that is, we have truth. Here, we know what is, reality, by being it. Here knowing or truth and being or reality coincide, or are one and the same.

Two *fundamental* aspects of knowing-by-being coinciding with two basic aspects of reality have been discussed. First, we can know ourselves as the Soul, or dimensionless Awareness, simply by Being the Soul. Here the Soul Knows the Truth of Itself, Its Reality, simply by Being It. Here Knowing or Truth and Being or Reality are one and the same. We have seen that the Soul, specifically, the Higher Soul, may Know Its Archetypal Vision in the same way. Second, we can know the nature of the particular or finite experiences arising in the Soul or dimensionless Awareness simply by being them. When our delusions, illusions and delusions are dissolved we come to know the truth of the finite or particular experiences of the universe, on any universal plane including that of the Higher Self or Higher Soul, simply by *being* them. Here too, knowing or truth and being or reality are one and the same. The knowing involved in the knowing-by-being of our finite experiences is—like the other three modalities of truth—also grounded in the Archetypes and the Higher Soul. This grounding of our knowing takes place in the two ways described in the previous paragraph: the Higher Soul compares our finite experiences to the Truth of Itself and Its Archetypal Vision and we receive the insights generated, or, by the Higher Soul reflecting down Its Truths to allow us as insights so that we can truthfully know the distinct and unique nature of our finite experiences. In short: when we know the truth of a finite experience by being it, we must not only *be* it, but also, we must draw upon the Knowing of the Higher Soul and Its Archetypal Vision.

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6. Orientation to the Passages on Truth and Reality

The following short passages discuss aspects of the path of truth and reality. An aphoristic style has both its advantages and disadvantages. Perhaps its greatest advantage is that essential ideas can be highlighted free of distracting details. In this regard, less is required of the reader. Perhaps the greatest disadvantage of such a style is the lack of supporting context to further elucidate these essential ideas and explore their implications. In this regard, more is required of the reader. To help mitigate this difficulty the foregoing chapters of this book provide a wider and more systematic, albeit brief, context for the following passages or thoughts. Also, it will become evident that many of the passages are related and therefore help to illuminate each other.

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7. The Necessity of Truth and Reality

Truth is not optional: more or less consciously, more or less certainly, more or less accurately, more or less completely, *everyone* has his or her understanding of what is true and what is not true, and lives accordingly. Reality is not optional: *everyone* more or less experiences reality or what is merely delusion and illusion, and lives accordingly.

The wise are living their truth, and the ignorant and stupid are living their “truth”—what they believe to be the truth. It is the commitment to truth that rules the world.

The philanthropist is dedicated to his truth, and the criminal to his. The holy man is dedicated to his truth, and the atheist to his. The dictator is dedicated to his truth and the oppressed to his. The scientist is dedicated to his truth, and the layman to his. All people are living *their* truth—that is, what they *believe* to be the truth.

Each of us is living, and has no choice but to live, according to his or her light, no matter how dim or bright that light may be.

Eventually, we discover the truth that to live according to the truth is to live according to reality—for truth is the knowing of reality or of what actually is—and that to live according to reality is, on the one hand, to avoid unnecessary suffering, while on the other hand, to deepen into the intrinsically fulfilling experiences of our Spiritual nature.

The more we come to *realise* that we are lost in delusion and illusion, and that these are not only the *ultimate* cause of our suffering but also of our lack of fulfilment, the more sincerely we dedicate ourselves to truth and reality.

When all other ways are seen to be not only useless, but found to be painful, then we choose the way of truth. Ultimately, everyone steps onto the path of consciously and deliberately seeking and living the truth.

When we suffer we naturally search for the cause of and solution to our suffering—this is essentially a search for *truth*. Suffering is part of life, and therefore, so too the search for truth.

Because we have the capacity for abstract thought, including self-reflection, we naturally give thought to how we can attain the greatest fulfilment and satisfaction from life. This is to say, we naturally, albeit more or less consciously, consistently and conscientiously, engage in the search for truth.

The Higher Soul has the Truth and Reality of Itself as formless Awareness by Being Itself. It also has the Truth and Reality of Its Vision of the Archetypes by Being that Vision. This Vision will include some of the Qualities of the Soul including Love, Joy, Peace, Beauty, Power, Immortality and Individuality. The Higher Soul is intrinsically and infinitely valuable. When we are born we *more or less* experience ourselves as the Higher Soul, but soon lose this experience as we develop from infants into children. We are then impelled to recover this “loss” of the Soul. Initially, we do this by acquiring or creating particular experiences, for it is through these experiences that something, intimations, of the Soul and Its Vision are reflected to, and evoked within us. Eventually however, we find that to progressively recover the Soul and Its Vision we must increasingly free ourselves from the delusions, illusions and attachments which we are, for the most part, unconsciously superimposing onto our existence. For this deepening truth is required. We see here that the search for truth and reality is *innate* to the human condition: on the one hand, we are seeking to recover the Truth and Reality which is the Higher Soul and Its Vision; on the other hand, deepening truth and reality are required for this journey.

The whole manifest universe is evolving to be an ever-greater revelation and expression, through particular experiences, of the Truth and Reality which is the Soul as formless Awareness, and the Archetypes. In this evolution we each have a part to play. Essentially, each of us is the Soul as formless Awareness, and deep within each of us we carry a unique Vision of the Archetypes. It is the *destiny* of each person to progressively actualise and express the Truth and Reality which is the Soul and Its Vision, and, in part, to do so through the particular experiences of the life that he or she creates.

Life is a movement toward the increasing revelation of truth.

The realisation and expression of truth and reality is part of our destiny.

Our lives are an *irresistible* movement toward the increasing discovery and living of what is true and real.

Despite appearances at times, the whole Universe supports the ever-greater revelation and living of the truth and of reality.

Everything conspires towards the greater revelation and expression of truth and reality. Everything serves truth and reality.

We continually turn away from the truth—to some degree—until we fully absorb the truth that the truth is the only *real* way.

The way of truth is the only real way—the only way which is in accord with reality and which is ultimately effective for fulfilment and well-being—all other ways lead back to the way of truth.

Truth is not *a* way—eventually we see that it is the *only* way.

It is wisdom to see that truth and reality are, ultimately, unavoidable.

The great truths of life are the same for all of us, govern all of us, and eventually must be known and lived by all of us.

Everyone—no exceptions—must sooner or later discover and traverse the great truths of life.

The path of truth is not for the feeble minded or feeble hearted, yet sooner or later we must all undertake it.

Why does truth matter? There is a manner in which in life actually exists, which we may call reality—this is axiomatic. There is, or is potentially, the absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete knowing of reality, a knowing which we may call the truth—this too is axiomatic. Through knowing and living the truth we put ourselves into harmony with reality and thereby reduce our suffering and deepen our fulfilment—this too is axiomatic.

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8. Defining Truth and Reality

The statement and assertion that ‘there is no such thing as truth’ contradicts itself for it implies that *this* position itself is not a truthful position. Therefore, the conclusion is that truth may indeed exist. Indeed, the statement that ‘there is no such thing as truth’ *presupposes* that we know what is meant by the word ‘truth’—otherwise the statement becomes meaningless. If the statement means that there is nothing that fulfils the definition of truth, nothing that fulfils truth once it is defined, then let us first hear what is meant by the word ‘truth’.

Let us begin by stating the obvious: when we come to discuss the nature of truth and reality we must be careful to define what we mean by these terms, but also related terms such as ‘delusion’, ‘illusion’, ‘objective’, ‘subjective’, ‘absolute’ and ‘relative’.

We may define reality as what actually is, the actual nature of existence, and not as that which we wrongly believe and imagine the actual nature of existence to be. Truth may be defined as the absolutely accurate, certain, complete and unchanging knowing of what actually is, reality, or part (an aspect) of reality. Conversely, non-truth may be defined as that which is *not* the absolutely accurate certain, complete and unchanging knowing of reality or part of reality.

Truth may be defined as the absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging or complete knowing of what actually is, reality, or part of reality, which will thereby be free of our delusions and illusions (or imaginings) about reality. This is the knowing of what actually is, reality, as opposed to our knowing of what is plus, and limited and distorted by, our own subjective or individual and imposed layer of delusions and illusions.

There are a class of insights or “knowings” regarding experience which are absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete—for example, that there is existence or that there is awareness—and to this class of insights we give the name ‘truth’. The absolute accuracy, certainty, unchangingness and completeness of such insights makes them self-verifying, self-evident, self-authoritative—there is no need to reach for an outside justification. Indeed, if the insight needed an external justification, on the one hand, the insight would *not* be itself absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete, would not be a truth, and, on the other hand, the justification *itself* would have to be absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete. Being absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete, such insights are also intrinsically powerful, that is, they are naturally compelling regarding our knowing and also our self-expression.

We may define the term ‘delusion’ to denote that which we believe is the truth regarding reality, but which is mistaken.

We may define the term ‘unreal’ to denote that which does not actually exist but which we wrongly believe and imagine does exist. The unreal is a belief and imagining about what actually exists where this thought and imagining is either mistaken to be what actually exists, or, mistaken to accurately represent what actually exists. In short, the unreal is merely an illusion.

We may define the word ‘illusion’ to denote that which is only imagination but which we mistake not to be the imagination but that which actually exists, reality.

In so far as they are thoughts and imaginings *per se* then delusions and illusions actually exist and are part of reality. But, the existence of which they speak or which they portray does not exist except as our thoughts and imaginings.

There is the knowing of experience *per se*, as it actually is, and, there is the knowing of experience mixed (or overlain) with our individual delusions and illusions (deluded imaginings) which, by definition, we fail to recognise as such. The former is truth, the latter is not.

Because truth is the absolutely accurate, certain and complete knowing of reality or part of it, this knowing will not be contradicted, which is to say, it will be unchanging. Because a delusion or an illusion is a *mistaken* knowing of reality, what actually is, it is subject to contradiction and change.

The deepening into truth is the deepening into the knowing of reality, what actually is. There is no path to reality which does not have truth or wisdom as its core.

Reality is revealed through the deepening of truth.

The path of truth is also the path of reality—sorting out what actually is or exists from what is fake or false.

Truth is the knowing of reality, that which actually is, and so, the greater the knowing of the truth the greater the knowing of reality, and the more we live in accord with the truth—which is the knowing of reality—the more we live in accord with reality.

A dedication to truth is also a dedication to reality.

Regarding the fundamental nature of reality, of what actually is, it seems that we have three choices. First, reality is that existence which ontologically, and perhaps chronologically, is first and fundamental, thus underived or self-sufficient, and which is unchanging. Traditionally, this reality has been regarded to be the Spirit or, alternatively, matter. Second, reality is, as some empiricists and existentialists seem to maintain, only an ever-changing series of states or experiences devoid of any constant or unchanging element (except change itself). Third, reality may be a combination of the two: that existence which is unchanging and ontologically first and fundamental, and from which or with which an ever-changing series of states or experiences arise and disappear. Whatever is regarded as reality, the truth then would be the absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete knowing of any such reality.

A number of spiritual traditions define Reality as that aspect of the Spiritual universe which is ontologically primary (or fundamental), underived, unchanging, without dimensions (or infinite or boundless) and, for want of a better way of putting it, of the highest quality. Here, The Spirit, or the Archetypes, or the Soul as dimensionless Awareness, may be regarded as Reality. Here, *non-reality* would be that which is secondary (not fundamental), derived, changing, and of lesser quality, namely, the manifested and finite forms of the universe. Alternatively, both aspects together may be considered to be reality—aspects of it. Whatever is regarded as reality, the truth will be the absolutely accurate, certain, complete and unchanging knowing of any such reality or part of it.

When reality is defined as that aspect of the Spiritual universe which is ontologically primary (or fundamental), underived, unchanging, dimensionless or infinite, and of the highest quality—for example, The Spirit, or the Archetypes, or the Soul as dimensionless Awareness—It is sometimes called *absolute* Reality.

By the description ‘absolute reality’, most spiritual traditions mean that existence which is completely without or beyond *any* finite dimensions or limitations.

To know something objectively means that we are not introducing our individual or subjective psychological states into what is being known and mistaking these for what is being known. This is to say that we know something free of our delusions and illusions. Objectivity may also mean that anyone *who has the requisite capacity* can have exactly the same knowing of that thing, that is, there is inter-subjective verification. Being free of delusions and illusions, this knowing will be absolutely accurate, unchanging and complete. If it is also certain, we can say that this knowing is the truth—objective truth.

There is the actual nature of existence, which we may call reality. It may also be called objective reality in that for anyone who has the capacity to know it free of his or her delusions and illusions this reality will be exactly the same.

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9. Relative and Absolute Truth and Reality

There are truths and approximations of truths, and a wise person not only does not confuse the two, he or she uses both as appropriate.

We may say that there are relative truths as approximations of the absolute truth. But, if we define truth as that which is *absolutely* accurate, certain, unchanging and complete, then these relative or approximate truths are not truths—they are delusions.

Absolute truth is truth that is absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete.

Any “truth” which is tentative or not final, is not actually the truth.

Part of wisdom is not mistaking approximate or relative truths for absolute truths, nor mistaking a truth about a part of reality for the whole truth about reality.

Some truths are based upon, and relative to, one’s experience *so far*. Relative truths of this nature may be found to be incorrect when a wider range of experience occurs. As such, they are not really truths.

A truth which is based and dependent upon a set of experiences, and which may change when new experiences occur, is not certain, unchanging or complete, and as such is not actually a truth,

If a finding or “truth” is based upon a set of experiences, then this truth is subject to change—being overturned or being qualified—as the set of experiences is enlarged. This is a relative truth. However, absolute truths—those which are absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete—are supported by, and can accommodate, *all possible* experiences. For example: 1) It is a self-evident truth that a finite or limited experience, a part of reality, is known through its relation to that which limits it. But further, this will be true for *any* finite or limited experience. 2) All experiences occur through awareness (sometimes called mind), therefore, the only world or life which we experience, and can ever experience, is one in awareness. 3) The dimensions of the time and space which we *experience* are dependent on the nature of our finite experiences, therefore, if these finite experiences in awareness change, so too the dimensions of time and space which we experience. 4) The law of non-contradiction: one thing, as that thing, cannot simultaneously be another thing. For example, a circle *qua* circle cannot at the same time be a triangle. 5) The apprehension of change requires an unchanging standard (by which to judge change). 6) Attaching to or “clinging” to that which is transitory results in emotional pain when it passes.

In so far as any of its conclusions are dependent upon empirical findings which may increase and change, science is a domain of relative, not absolute truths.

Almost all findings of science in so far as they are concerned with conclusions regarding the so-called physical world are tentative. These findings are based on our experiences of the so-called physical world where these experiences are, in the end, only our sense-perceptions. The range of these perceptions is not final or complete, and therefore, neither are the conclusions which are dependent upon them. There are two essential reasons why this is so. First, our perceptions of the so-called physical objects, and more generally of the world, are determined by our relationship to those objects. Potentially, this relationship may always change thereby generating new perceptions of the objects and, in turn, new conclusions regarding these objects. Second, the quality and range of our perceptions may improve through various means such as new instruments, in turn, this extended range of perceptions may lead to new conclusions regarding these objects.

The old Euclidean-Newtonian science believed that the dimensions of the world such as time, space, motion, weight, mass, shape, and so forth were fixed and, in particular, existed independently of the mind of the observer. Einstein, with the Theory of Relativity, concluded that space, time and other dimensions of the world were not fixed or absolute, but instead, variable. He concluded: 1) that the knowing of the dimensions of the world depended upon the experiences of the observer 2) that these experiences of the world depended, in turn, on our relationship to the world 3) that as our relationship to the world changed so too our experiences of the world, and so too the dimensions of the world, such as time and space, based on those experiences 4) that the world could always be, or potentially be, observed

and experienced through a *new* relationship, which in turn would give new experiences of the world and, in turn, more or less new dimensions of space and time and the other dimensions based on those experiences. This is to say, that the world has no fixed dimensions such as those of time and space, but instead, these dimensions will always vary, more or less, with each new relationship which we share with the world and with each new set of experiences based on those relationships.

Some people, including some scientists, seem to believe that the conclusions of science are a logical consequence based on the data of its experiments. The conclusions of science are in fact the outcomes of *thinking* about the results of the experiments. Therefore, the quality of these conclusions will, in part, depend on the *quality* of the thought which generated them. Our thinking about something is done, in part, by relating it to our past store of beliefs. The quality of our thinking about something will depend then upon whether our store of beliefs is truthful. However, most people, including scientists, carry a store of wrong beliefs, and consequently, think about and interpret their experimental results in the darkness of these delusions. Naturally, some of their conclusions are incorrect. Some of the major delusions which many scientists still bring to the interpretation and elaboration of their experimental results—to reach their conclusions—are those which belong to what might be called the conventional or ego-centred view of reality: the belief in matter as some sort of three-dimensional, self-sufficient substance; the belief in time and space as having fixed or absolute dimensions; the belief in causality; and the belief that the subject or observer is separate from an external and independently existing world. With increasing force, science itself is showing that these are false assumptions about the nature of reality. For example, in recent decades, Einstein's Theory of Relativity has shown that space and time do not have absolute dimensions. Findings in sub-atomic physics has shown that matter is not a static three-dimensional substance, but may exhibit both particle and wave like behaviour, and is interchangeable with energy—where the nature of energy itself is unknown. Likewise, the law of causality, as normally understood, can no longer account for the consequences of some subatomic experiments and events. And the finding of quantum theory that the experimental design to some degree affects or even creates the nature of the world—specifically the sub-atomic world—which is observed, has begun to break down the supposed separation between an the observing subject and a world which exists independently of that subject. All of this leads to the conclusion, that the only conclusions of science that should be taken as truthful are those which do not, unwittingly, incorporate any delusions into their interpretations and elaborations of experimental data. This also means that scientific results need to be interpreted by people with correct metaphysical understanding.

How do we know the truth? We may have a reason, as a justification, for our knowing or truth. However, if there is to be knowing of the truth, there cannot be an endless regress of justifications; sooner or later a reason or justification must be self-sufficient, self-verifying. Alternatively, we may know the truth of something by *comparing* it to something other, for example, we know that something is a circle by comparing it to our concept of a circle. Again however, there cannot be an

endless regress of comparisons, and sooner or later we must have a standard which is self-sufficiently true. *Sooner or later, truth must be self-validating or verifying*, it cannot rely on something other where this other, in turn, is in need of validation or verification, and so on *ad infinitum*. This is to say that ultimately truth occurs as something immediately or directly recognised or apprehended, and not through a mediated or indirect justification or comparison. How does this immediate and self-verifying knowing of the truth occur? Through the Higher Soul. The Higher Soul, the depth of oneself, exists as dimensionless and unchanging Awareness which has a unique and changeless Vision of the Archetypes. The Higher Soul has the Truth of Itself and Its Vision—as that knowing which is absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete—simply through Being Itself and Its Vision. Against this unchanging standard of Itself and Its Vision it can compare the finite experiences of existence to determine the truth of them, that is, how, to what degree, and in what ways they reflect, express and approximate Itself as dimensionless Awareness and the Archetypes. These truths may be then passed down to us as spontaneous and *self-evident* insights so that we too have the absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete truth of reality or a part of reality. These insights may arise from direct contact with our particular experiences, through the knowing-by-being of our experiences, through intuitions regarding our experiences, or as we reason about our experiences. Further, through sufficiently clearing away our delusions and illusions, we may also come to know the truth of the Higher Soul and Its Vision by Being this Soul and Its Vision.

The truth or wisdom regarding our *finite* or particular experiences upon *any* level or plane of universal existence is *always* the “grasping” of what are variously called the Archetypes, Forms, Ideas, Intelligibles, Primal Beings, or Names of God. The Archetypes are the changeless Beings which are the essential design of the universe, and all finite or particular experiences are expressions and reflections of the Archetypes. The depth of ourselves, the Higher Soul, has a unique and unchanging Vision of the Archetypes which It Knows by Being that Vision. In *this way* the Higher Soul has the absolutely accurate, certain, complete and unchanging knowing, or Truth, of the Archetypes. The Higher Soul compares *our* finite experiences to the Archetypes, and in doing so, knows the truth of these experiences, in particular, in what ways and to what degrees they express the Archetypes. This knowledge is then passed “down” to us, into our everyday awareness as truthful and spontaneous insights about our finite experiences. These insights may arise from direct contact with our particular experiences, through the knowing-by-being of our particular experiences, through intuitions regarding our experiences, or as we reason about our experiences.

The Soul and the Archetypes *may* be called the Absolutes in that they are both unchanging and infinite (or boundless or unlimited) in nature. All finite experiences in the Spiritual universe following the Archetypes are *lesser* reflections and expressions of the Soul and the Archetypes—limited and lesser in nature. We can say that Soul and Archetypes are Absolutes while the all finite experiences are approximations of these Absolutes. The Higher Soul can compare or relate our finite experiences to Itself and the Archetypes to ascertain how, in what ways, and to what degree, they are approximations of Itself and the Archetypes—in what

ways, and to what degree, they are approximations of the Absolutes. We can receive these truths as spontaneous insights.

The nature of the relation between, on the one hand, the Archetypes or the Soul, which are beyond space and time, and which are infinite or boundless, and on the other hand, the finite forms of the universe—a relation and comparison which the Higher Soul is aware of and undertakes—is evidently beyond our *normal* capacity of thought and imagination which works only in spatial and temporal forms.

The Soul and the Archetypes *may* be regarded as *absolute* Reality, for they are unchanging and infinite. Similarly, the absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete knowing of this absolute Reality—which occurs by being It—can be called the absolute Truth. In *this way* of looking at things, the entities making up the manifested universe, and which are lesser reflections and approximations of absolute Reality and Truth, may be regarded as relative realities and truths.

The Soul as formless Awareness and the Archetypes have infinite (or unlimited or boundless) and unchanging value—we can say that They are Absolute Goodness. The finite experiences or forms of the universe are lesser reflections and expressions of these Realities. The Higher Soul can compare our finite experiences to Itself as formless Awareness, and to Its Vision of the Archetypes, to thereby determine the relative value or goodness of our experiences. We may receive these evaluations as truths about what is good and not so good.

There exists the absolute Good: the Soul as pure Awareness and the Divine Archetypes. Manifest and finite forms or experiences more or less express or reflect the Good. And, different individuals are more or less able to discern, aspire to, and to follow the Good itself, or the Good as it is expressed and reflected through finite forms or experiences.

The statement ‘Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.’ should not mean that everyone *simply* has his or her own personal or individual apprehension of beauty. A person’s appreciation of beauty depends on his or her maturity, that is, to what extent he or she is able to experience the Archetype of Beauty—Beauty Itself, Absolute, or unchanging and infinite, Beauty—being reflected through the finite forms of life.

All finite experiences or forms in the Spiritual universe are *lesser* reflections and expressions of the Archetypes and the Soul as pure Awareness; this it to say that the *quality* of the being (or existence) of these finite forms or experiences is lesser in relation to the Soul and the Archetypes of which they are reflections. Thus, we can say that with regard to its finite forms or experiences each plane or level of universal existence following the Archetypes is a *lesser* degree of reality or being *vis-à-vis* the Soul and the Archetypes which are the absolute Reality or Being. Further, we could say that the knowing of this absolute Reality, the Archetypes, is the Truth. *However, if* we define reality, differently, as that which actually is—and not as that which we wrongly believe and imagine the actual nature of existence to be—then the entire Spiritual universe, free of our delusions and illusions, is *equally*

reality; and truth would be the absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete knowing of this reality.

What might be called the ‘subjective error’ in epistemology—for example, typical of Post-modernism—is that the truth regarding our experiences is completely one’s own *personal* or *individual* creation. However, the truth about our experiences, in so far as it is true, is always due to a non-personal or non-individual reception which is, potentially, universal or the same for all people. For example, the truthful understanding that an experience is one green triangle is not a personal and individual creation. Instead, the concepts—‘one’, ‘green’ and ‘triangle’—which form this truthful understanding are the reception of insights which occur *spontaneously*, albeit after seeing a number of experiences which are particular examples of oneness, greenness, and triangleness. These concepts or insights are the same or *universal* for all people, that is, all people have the same concepts ‘one’, ‘green’ and ‘triangle’, although the *terms* used to describe these concepts will differ from language to language.

A *concept* is not its particular or finite instances. For example, the concept of a circle is not any of the particular or finite spatial circles, rather, each of these finite circles is an example or instance of the concept of a circle. The concept of the circle itself has no finite spatial dimensions at all. Concepts have no spatial dimensions at all. They are formless. Further, unlike its various finite examples or instances, a concept does not change. Thus, a particular or finite circle may change its dimensions from small to large, and its colour from dark to light, but, the *concept* of ‘circle’ always remains the same despite these changes in the particular or finite circle(s) involved. Further still, concepts such as ‘circle’, ‘one’, ‘tree’ and so on are definitely known—sometimes we may be uncertain about whether a particular or finite experience is an example of a concept, but we are not uncertain about knowing or understanding the concept *per se*. A concept cannot be verified by reference to something other which, in turn, is referred to another, in an infinite regress, otherwise the concept would never become known. Concepts are self-evidently self-verifying as to their nature. They are *indirect* apprehensions of the Archetypes and share in the self-verifying nature of the Archetypes. A concept is our indirect grasping or receiving of an Archetype held in the Mind of God. As unchanging, complete and certain, our concepts, such as ‘circle’, constitute truths.

What is a truthful insight regarding our experiences? A true insight is to *indirectly* grasp the immutable Archetypes (or Ideas) present in the depth of Ourselves. Our everyday experiences are expressions or reflections, albeit imperfect, of the Archetypes. And, our insights are to indirectly “grasp” the Archetypes—that is how, in what ways, and to what degrees they are—revealed to us through or via our ordinary or everyday experiences. Such insights will include: our concrete and abstract concepts; our apprehensions of the laws governing our experiences; and insights into the true nature of our experiences, for example, of their solely conscious or mental nature. The more extensive and in-depth the reception of these insights the greater is one’s wisdom—but it is really the *reception* of the wisdom of God, for the Archetypal Realm can be said to be the Mind of God. The tapping and

banging together of so-called physical particles cannot, as the Materialists would like us to believe, ever produce any such insights or wisdom.

Concepts have no spatial dimensions. That which has no spatial dimensions cannot, by definition, be located or positioned in space. Therefore, concepts are not, cannot be, housed in a spatial brain. They transcend the brain and space.

Insights about reality—arising from direct experience, through intuition and reason, or through knowing-by-being—are responses of the Higher Soul or Higher Self to our genuine call and need for illumination about the nature of our experiences. Truth is *not* received from the brain. The most that can be said is that the brain may *translate* and *reflect* a truth into a particular type of thought and feeling. The brain cannot produce the truth because the brain does not contain the truth; it is merely a conglomeration of particles or waves or so-called energy. The particles, waves or energy of the brain can alter, but they could never bring forth from themselves that which they do not already possess, the truth, for this would be for something to come forth from nothing; nor can they bring forth that which is greater than themselves, for again, this would be for something to come from nothing. For the same reasons, so-called matter cannot produce *any* type of awareness—although it may influence the nature of the *content* of awareness—including truth as a thought-feeling: on the one hand, matter, as normally defined, is *not* awareness, but totally other, and as other, could not possibly bring forth awareness; on the other hand, awareness—including its states such as truth, love, beauty—is self-evidently greater than matter, yet the lesser cannot bring forth the greater. A long time ago the mystic-philosopher Plotinus recognised the impossibility of the brain producing truth as reason and stated: ‘For by what sort of atomic blow, whether the movement goes downwards or strikes against it from any direction, will the soul be engaged in reasonings or impulses of a particular kind, or any kind of reasoning or impulses or movements, necessary or not?’ (*Enneads*, III.1.3.21-3).

Is it possible to have a truth regarding a *part* of what actually is, reality, for this so-called truth may change when I come to know a larger part or all of reality? It is possible to have a truth regarding a part of reality *when* this truth is self-evident from the part, and therefore, is not dependent upon knowing the rest of reality. For example, it is a self-evident truth that a finite or limited experience, a part of reality, is known through its relation to that which limits it—this is true regardless of whether or not I know the rest of reality. And, it is also self-evident that awareness is involved in my experience of a finite or limited experience—this too is true regardless of whether or not I know the rest of reality. It is *also* the case that by knowing the truth of a part of reality I can know a truth regarding a greater part of reality. For example, it is a self-evident truth that a finite or limited experience, a part of reality, is known through its relation to that which limits it. But further, this will be true for *any* finite or limited experience. Or, it is self-evident truth that awareness is involved in my experience of a finite or limited form which is a part of reality. But further, this will be true for my experience of *any* finite or limited form—or can I experience a finite form without being aware of it? Or, I *might* come to know the truth that a finite experience has dimensionless Awareness for its

origin. In doing so, I would know that *any* finite form which has dimensionless Awareness for its origin will have the *same* dimensionless Awareness for its origin, for there can only be *one* dimensionless Awareness.

We can know the truth, or potentially know the truth, of the dimensions or characteristics of a finite or limited experience, which will be part of reality; and then, we can know the truth, or potentially know the truth, of the dimensions or characteristics of the next and new finite or limited experience, which will be part of reality; and so on. But, this situation must be sharply distinguished from another. We may believe and assume that our ongoing and finite experiences are all experiences of a single, unchanging entity, for example, a physical object. In this case, we cannot know the truth of the finite dimensions or characteristics of *this entity* if these finite experiences are to some extent incomplete or inaccurate, for here, truth as that knowing which is absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete would be negated.

We can know the truth, or potentially know the truth, of the dimensions or characteristics of a finite or limited experience, which will be part of reality; and then, we can know the truth, or potentially know the truth, of the dimensions or characteristics of the next and new finite or limited experience, which will be part of reality; and so on. However, if I *assume* that each new and finite experience is still in *some way* the old finite experience, then I cannot know the truth of the dimensions of that experience. Why? Because here we *seem* to have *one* experience which is to some degree subject to change, and as such, we cannot know the truth of the dimensions of that one experience, where the truth is that which is absolutely unchanging and complete. However, the *actuality* of our situation is that there is one new and finite experience being followed by another new experience, and so on, where we can know, or potentially know, the truth of the dimensions or characteristics of each *new* experience.

The existence and dimensions (or nature) of any finite experience are defined by, dependent upon, and known through, its relation to what is other, that is, it is known in a relative way. We do *not* know of a finite experience and its dimensions independently, in themselves, but only in relation to what is other. However, this is not to say that we cannot know the truth of the relative dimensions of a finite or limited experience. For example, can we not be certain that one finite experience is definitely larger or smaller, shorter or taller, darker or lighter, etc., than another? It may be objected that we cannot know even these relative dimensions of a finite or limited experience. Why? For its dimensions will or may change as its relations to that which is other change, and this means we cannot have the truth of those dimensions where the truth is that which is absolutely unchanging and complete. For example, if a coloured square, Y, is related to another, relatively larger and darker square, X, then Y will be relatively small and light. Whereas if Y is related to another relatively smaller and lighter square, Z, Y will now be relatively large and dark. Which are the true dimensions of Y? They are not unchanging or absolute (or fixed), but relative and changing. Can we know of Y's absolute dimensions? Only if that which limits it, and to which it is related, say, X, is, itself, of unchanging absolute dimensions. But this is never the case. For X too is finite,

and therefore, limited by, defined by, dependent upon, and known through, its relation to what is other. Its dimensions then are not absolute, but will vary depending on its relations to that which is other. The same is so for any finite experience. It seems then that we cannot have the truth of the dimensions of any finite experience, form or entity, because these dimensions are changing, or are potentially so, whereas truth is that which is absolutely unchanging. However, there is a subtle flaw in the argument. It is *not* that we have *one unchanging* finite experience or entity, say Y, which is also changing its dimensions, or which may potentially change its dimensions, as its relation to another finite experience changes. Here, there could be no truth regarding its changing dimensions. Rather, the situation is simply that we have one finite experience being followed by *another* and new finite experience, and so on, where we can know the truth, or potentially know the truth, of the relative dimensions of each new finite or limited experience.

Surely my body does not change its spatial dimensions, they are absolute. But, the body's dimensions are determined by a spatial measure to which the body is related. But, the body's absolute dimensions can only be assured if the dimensions of that measure are absolute. But, the dimensions of the spatial measure are not absolute but, in turn, depend on comparison to, or being related to, another spatial measure, and so on. Yes, but do not all the measures together have absolute, unchanging dimensions? How would we know if we do not have an absolute measure by which to compare all these other measures? But we do not, for the dimensions of any measure will depend on its relation to another measure, and so on *ad infinitum*. Of course, for practical purposes we do *assume* that many of our experiences or entities do have unchanging or absolute dimensions.

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10. Readiness for, and Openness to, Truth and Reality

Plato or Socrates states somewhere that to begin the search for truth we must first see that we do *not* know. To come to know what is true and to experience what is real we must first suspect that we do not know what is true and are not experiencing what is real.

To want to see, we must first realise that we are blind. To want the light, we must first realise that we are wandering in the dark.

To come to know what is true and real we must first suspect that we are not, in fact, experiencing what is true and real.

We may find it amazing that people are generally not that interested in getting rid of their ignorance, and in finding answers to the deeper questions about themselves

and their lives, until we understand that this disinterest in the truth is part of their ignorance: they do not know that they are lost, or they are not yet *really* able to see the *necessity* of dispelling their ignorance.

It is true to say that many people live in a muddle of wrong thinking, and therefore, in a muddle of values, emotions and motivations based upon that thinking, so much so, that they do not see the extent of the muddle or the need to be free of it.

The pervasiveness and common acceptance of our fundamental delusions and illusions—those concerning the nature of the self, space, time, matter, causality, and the Spiritual—mean that their truth and reality, or lack of it, are generally not *seriously* questioned.

Generally, society continually inculcates its false views of reality.

The deepest delusions hide as truth, and the deepest illusions as reality.

Many “truths” are nothing but widely held delusions.

Under the cloak of normalcy, a great deal of insanity goes about unnoticed.

That a person believes that he knows the truth when he doesn't is one of the greatest barriers to the search for and discovery of the truth.

One of the greatest obstacles to the accurate investigation of the nature of reality are our presumptions regarding the nature of reality—our misbeliefs about the nature of experience, of what is, which are consciously or unconsciously considered to be beyond question, inviolable.

Most people do not undertake the search for reality because they believe that they are already experiencing it; which is *also* to say, that they believe that they know the truth of their existence.

Many, if not most people spend almost no time consciously and deliberately seeking the truth of life. Perhaps they have enough? Perhaps they are expecting to get through without it? Perhaps they are hoping to “wing it”?

Most people are more or less content to be asleep because they believe that they are awake, content to go on dreaming because they believe that they are experiencing reality.

How profound, how absolutely amazing, that most people do not deeply, ardently and determinedly seek the truth and meaning of their lives—it is as if they are mesmerized, under a spell, almost asleep.

The illusion of a world of characterised by three-dimensional space, linear time, populated by material objects, governed by causation, and all existing independently of oneself as a personality or ego, is so deeply entrenched, pervasive

and hypnotic, that it is rarely *seriously* questioned.

In this world, most Souls live in a condition of deep hypnosis.

When pressed, many, perhaps most people will admit that they do not know the answers to the deeper questions; and yet they have made no real effort to find these answers—content to live in ignorance. Sleeping through life—a commonly preferred option.

How do the ignorant and deluded view wisdom, as the knowing of the fundamental truths of life? They believe that they are wise, or that such wisdom is unnecessary, or that other things are far more important, or that it cannot be realised.

Seeing our ignorance and yet not doing anything substantial to address that deficiency, simply shows that we have not yet seen enough—the full extent, implications and consequences of our ignorance—for if this was the case, we would not be content to remain half asleep.

In our ignorance or delusion we believe that truth is not that important, that we do not need truth, or that a little truth will do, or that we do not need to live according to the truth we have found.

Sometimes we are ambiguous about an issue—uncertain of our true views, feelings, needs and aspirations. If this issue is *important*, be sure that sooner or later Life will force you to make choices about it, and so, will force you to clearly define your understanding of it, and relationship to it.

Maybe she believes that she can defer and delay this pursuit of deeper wisdom until later in life, but will she make it that far? Will she have the energy and intact capacities for such arduous work when she is older? And in the meantime, is she willing to live accordingly to her default position of being ignorant and deluded, and to suffer the consequences of both?

Some people believe that they are going to recognise truth and reality when they pass out of the body at its death, even when they cannot recognise truth and reality now, nor even have much interest in it! It seems that they believe that a change of experiences alone will bring wisdom, and they themselves will need to do nothing—pretty much what they are doing now. That people believe that their delusions and illusions, deeply imbedded in their psychic structures, are going to magically drop away when they pass over, is just another of their delusions. No: they will still be identified with an ego and a body, still believe that they are separate from others, still desiring this, that and the other, still in conflict—although there will be variations on the theme.

Death will bring about a change of one's experiences no doubt, but a change of experiences does not equal a deepening of wisdom or reality. While death will bring to one a change of experiences, one will also bring to the experience his or her existing delusions and illusions.

Most people believe that they are experiencing truth and reality now, but this is mainly illusion, just as when they pass over at death they will similarly believe that they are experiencing truth and reality.

The truth is that many or most people are not ready for the truth about who or what they are and the world is—not ready intellectually, intuitively and emotionally, or in terms of what it would mean for them practically, personally, socially, morally and Spiritually.

For most of us, the discovery of the truth and reality of our existence will constitute a more or less complete subversion of our current “reality” and of all that we have invested in it. This is one reason why we can only take so much truth and reality at any given time.

It is a courageous man or woman who *really* asks for the truth and for reality.

Who is ready to hear that his or her “reality” is largely an illusion?

So radically different is the non-egoistic and non-dualistic view of reality in relation to the beliefs we have hitherto held about what we are and what the world is, there will probably be a long period of becoming more comfortable with this new understanding before we *seriously* commit to it.

Each of us comes to truth and to reality little by little.

Many people are simply not ready for the depths of Spiritual understanding, for they would contradict and overturn their fundamental beliefs about reality—including their beliefs about who or what they are—which they have long held, and in which they are deeply invested. Therefore, the depths of Spiritual understanding are often reacted to with fear or scorn or, ironically, seen as forms of madness or naiveté.

The greatest barrier to the truth is that subconsciously we don’t want to hear it or experience it.

When people are convinced that their delusions are true and their illusions real, they are going to be apathetic, incredulous or hostile toward the true and the real.

Such is the distance between truth and reality and what most people mistakenly believe and experience to be true and real, that talk of truth and reality is deeply incomprehensible, unacceptable or confronting to most people, to their illusions, and will evoke a number of reactions, most of which are unfavourable: bewilderment, apathy, incredulity, ridicule, laughter, pity, scorn, contempt, hostility, impatience, anxiety, disorientation, distress, and probably a questioning of *your* sanity.

We commonly have severe *initial* reactions as we open to greater degrees of reality

and truth.

Until we are ready, truths, experiences and opportunities go unrecognised and unappreciated.

To *some* extent, for the time being, we are *all* unteachable: too closed-minded, hard-hearted and weak-willed to see, feel and act in a higher way. Such is the nature of things.

Will a deep and sustained longing for a life which is real and true occur without a prior and commensurately deep and sustained realisation of life as illusory and false?

The exposure of our delusions and illusions is the dark, empty and disorienting passage through which we pass to come to the true and real.

Gradually he comes to realise that for his whole life he has *not* been living in reality and truth but in illusion and delusion; and realises also that he has been trying to be happy by trying to make his delusions and illusions work. From this *realisation* comes a deep commitment to the true and real.

The more deeply we are *convinced* that we are living in illusion, the more deeply we aspire to be free of it.

The Heart cannot really be in that which is in some way felt, intuited or known to be false and unreal.

Having now seen the fakeness of so-called reality she cannot live as normal where things illusory are taken as real—the bottom has dropped out.

He awakens to the truth that the world and the life which he took to be reality are not reality, but mainly his illusions mixed with reality. He sees and experiences that he does not belong in this world, because to participate in it, *in the normal way*, is to belong to, or be part of, a world which is largely illusory; and to belong here would be to live a lie. He also comes to see that he has been struggling to find and be himself in this world because he has been struggling to establish himself as something unreal, as an illusory self, as being the body and the personality—a person. He sees that to regard himself as this, at least fundamentally, is to be fake and quite worthless. He now sees what has been at the bottom of his recurrent feelings of worthlessness, fakeness, meaninglessness, emptiness, depression, disorientation, and continual questioning—trying to live a lie. He sees that a new, truthful and real way of living and being is now necessary—not optional.

He comes to see that the experience of life as meaningless, hollow, deficient and dark is *actually* the experience of his own delusional and illusory experience of life, and the exposure of it for what it is—fake. The challenge is not to live the old life or attempt to resurrect the old life, to live out or resurrect the old delusions and illusions—for how would this now be possible?—but instead, to realise the truth

and reality of life.

There is no revelation of the Divine without a deep yearning for It. And generally, there is no real and sincere longing for the Divine until there is, in some way, a deep dissatisfaction with the world. But the dissatisfaction is not actually with the world *itself*, which is in fact an expression of and within the Divine, but with the *illusory* existence in which we live and which we have mistaken for the world.

When your old world has crumbled down and is strewn about you, don't try to rebuild it, for the reason why it has crumbled down and is strewn about you is that it was an illusion—a fragile, imaginary and temporary structure which you mistook to be solid, permanent and real. Turn now to something higher, deeper and greater.

When things are broken, rebuild on a higher level.

She will come to experience the meaninglessness and deficiency of life as it is normally understood and experienced through the veils of delusion and illusion; and so the Spiritual journey will begin, to find something greater and truly fulfilling: life unveiled as truth and reality.

Above all, we must long to experience reality rather than illusion, truth rather than falsehood.

We must love the truth above all else, otherwise we shall sacrifice the truth for whatever we love or desire more. We are able to do this when we realise the truth that knowing and living the truth is *the* key to all of our riches.

If we will know the truth, we must love the truth above all else.

Can we bring to our search for truth and reality the same passion which we bring to falling in love with a beautiful woman or man? One day we shall.

Eventually, we fall in love with truth and reality.

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11. The Veiling and Unveiling of Reality

If reality is defined as that which actually is or exists, as opposed to what we, ourselves, creatively and wrongly believe and imagine to exist, then what is it that fulfils this definition, what is reality so defined?

Reality may be defined as that which actually is or exists, as opposed to what we, ourselves, creatively and wrongly believe and imagine to exist. The entirety of reality or what actually exists is the Spiritual universe. When we consider the Spiritual universe *below the level of the Archetypal Realm*, we find that reality has

two *fundamental* aspects: formless or dimensionless Awareness; and manifest and more or less finite forms or experiences “in” that Awareness. Of course, we *may* wish to restrict the term ‘reality’ to the first aspect of existence only, namely, dimensionless Awareness. Truth may be defined as the absolutely accurate, certain, complete and unchanging knowing of reality or part of reality. Truth then, will be the absolutely accurate, certain, complete and unchanging knowing of dimensionless Awareness and the manifest and finite forms of Awareness, or part of these. Again, we may wish to restrict the term ‘truth’ to the knowing of the first aspect of reality only, namely, dimensionless Awareness. When we do so, we may wish to capitalise the terms ‘Truth’ and ‘Reality’ for they refer to That which has no dimensions.

Essentially, each of us is dimensionless Awareness in which finite experiences are unfolding, as such each of us is reality, that which actually is. But, most of us do not fully know the truth of that which we are, and therefore, do not know the truth of reality. Instead, due to our delusions, illusions and attachments, we have a limited and distorted view of ourselves and therefore of reality.

As Awareness Itself not separate from the finite forms appearing “within” It, we are Reality. But we do not recognise or know this Truth. Why? We, Awareness, are *attached* to certain finite experiences or phenomena and have thereby *restricted* our focus and experience to them alone. Further, upon this restricted field of experience we have, for the most part unconsciously, created and superimposed a layer of delusions and illusions (imaginings). Consequently, we do not simply experience what is, reality, Awareness not separate from Its finite forms—Ourselves. Instead, it is this restricted experience mixed with our delusions and imaginings which we normally and wrongly experience and mistake to be reality.

When the normal layer of delusions, illusions and attachments have been removed one knows the truth of experience, of what is, of reality, of oneself, in a direct and unmediated way by simply being that experience, being what is, being reality, being oneself.

Everything is experienced through the veil of the past, a past accumulation of wrong ideas and imaginings, *until* this veil has been removed so that we may experience experience simply, actually, as it is—this will be to experience reality.

There *is* something real regarding our present experience, this is undeniable, but, we must not mistake what is real for our delusions and illusions which are also currently part of our experience.

What is our actual experience? A continual series of mental states appearing in Awareness. From our actual experience, reality, we somehow unconsciously create and fabricate our so-called reality.

From the succession of finite experiences or mental states—thoughts, emotions, perceptions, desires, needs, aspirations, memories and imaginings—which is all that we ever experience, we piece together a permanent, physical, external and self-

sufficient world—but, actually, it exists *only* in our thought and imagination.

Through metaphysical analysis we begin to appreciate the immense, complex, comprehensive and systematic work of creative construction that the mind has undertaken, largely unconsciously: from out of its endless succession of ephemeral mental states—all that it experiences—it has constructed a world of material objects set in fixed, three-dimensional space and in linear time unfolding at a uniform rate, and, created oneself as an ego—a temporal-spatial and apparently permanent entity—housed within a body. Yet, careful analysis clearly shows that *all* that one *ever actually* experiences is an ongoing series of ephemeral mental states within Awareness.

We keep overlooking the fundamental nature of what is, of what we always experience: that there is only an ever-changing succession of experiences or mental states, and that undefinable element which is common to all of them, Awareness. We continually overlook this fundamental nature of what is, and look instead to the illusory world we have fabricated from it.

We are experiencing the surface of life, and so, of ourselves, and not its depths.

Really, there are no inner and outer worlds, but only ever the intimate expressions of your own Awareness, which are unconsciously and mistakenly constructed and created into an inner and outer world.

We are infinite-eternal Awareness dreaming that we are a permanent ego housed in a material body surrounded by an independently existing world of fixed spatial and temporal dimensions.

There is no world out there—it is all within You.

The whole world appears within, and so, is a creation of, Awareness. This is to say that the whole world appears within, and is creation of, the Divine.

The creation of our false world or “reality” has two central aspects: on the hand, we have lost the full experience of ourselves as dimensionless Awareness; on the other hand, out of the finite experiences passing in Awareness we have, for the most part unconsciously, constructed in the mind and imagination a false world or “reality”.

As we mature from infants we attach to some of our finite experiences because of a natural inclination to hold onto that which is pleasurable. We also shun that which is painful. More generally, we attach to some of our finite experiences because of our unconscious beliefs that fulfilment lies in them. We also shun their opposites. In the absence of sufficient cognitive capacity, this is naturally a large part of the way we relate to our experiences. However, in doing so we lose the experience of ourselves as dimensionless Awareness, for attachments close us off from our Spiritual Depth. Having progressively lost the experience of Awareness, and left only with our finite or particular experiences, from them we gradually and unconsciously come to construct a largely false and imagined world or “reality”.

Believing this to be reality we naturally attach to it and close out the Spiritual even more. In large measure, the path of truth and reality, or the Spiritual path, is to reverse this process.

As our consciousness has gradually developed from infants, we have unconsciously woven a veil of delusions and illusions through which we now view all of our experiences, that is, through which we view reality.

Our different experiences are manifestations of dimensionless Awareness, which is a Oneness or Unity “underlying” all experiences, all manifestations. However, because we are attached to these manifestations, we have lost the experience of this underlying and fundamental Awareness or Oneness or Unity. Further, through the mind, we come to believe and imagine that these different manifestations have characteristics which they do not in fact possess. In particular, we wrongly believe and imagine that many of these different manifestations or finite experiences of Awareness are self-existing, enduring, physical, three-dimensional entities and which are separate from each other in space. This process of attributing a false reality to the manifestations or finite experiences of Awareness—which occurs through losing contact with the experience of Awareness, and by adding our false ideas and imaginings to our finite experiences—we may call ‘reification’.

Regarding our finite or particular experiences, we only ever experience a constant succession or flow. These experiences are variously called sense perceptions, emotions, thoughts, needs, desires, aspirations, memories and imaginings. From this succession of mental states we have gradually and unconsciously created and constructed the delusion-illusion that we are a permanent entity called the ego, interred in a material brain and body of three, fixed spatial dimensions which, in turn, is located in an external and independently existing world populated by other material and three-dimensional objects, all of which are passing through time, itself an external, independently existing continuum of fixed rate and direction. How is it that we come to build up and believe in such a “reality”? As we develop from infants we progressively lose the experience of our Divine nature as the Soul and Its Qualities. We are left with our finite experiences. It is clear that our finite experiences are associated and unfold in consistent, often very consistent, ways. This enables us to *assume and imagine* things about the nature or reality of these experiences. For example, it is the strict and continuing associations between our sense perceptions which allow us to use the imagination to build our visual perceptions into three-dimensional objects. These we assume to actually exist. These assumptions and imaginings are in accord with our future experiences which generally continue to be associated and to unfold in the same consistent ways. Consequently, our assumptions and imaginings are progressively “confirmed” as true, and the world they speak of as real. This mind-and-imagination-made reality will be projected onto, and mixed up with, our actual experiences. And, it is this *mixture* of our actual experiences with our delusions and illusions which we mistakenly believe and experience to be reality.

It is quite something to seriously realise that one has never known oneself, let alone another, but only ever known oneself, others and the world as limited, distorted,

and veiled by delusions and illusions.

Many or most people do not question the nature of reality because consciously or unconsciously they believe that they know what reality is, and, believe also that they are experiencing reality. Consequently, they make little progress along the Spiritual path which is essentially about dissolving our delusions, illusions and related attachments to fully know and experience reality.

Consciously and unconsciously most people do not like to have their view of reality, particularly their belief in *who* they are, in which they have everything invested, *seriously* questioned. This is why Spiritual progress is often so slow.

Our present experience is reality, always, but over it we are laying a veil of delusions, imaginings, and attachments which diminish and distort it. We take this diminished and distorted experience to be reality. The Spiritual path is essentially about the letting go of, or the dissolution of, these delusions, dreams and desires.

The Spiritual path is an exchanging of realities, or more precisely, the exchange of the pseudo-real for the real.

We imagine and project materiality, self-sufficiency, reality, externality, otherness, permanence, three-dimensional space, causality, time and the like, onto our sense perceptions to help create the world as we ordinarily know and experience it. We need to dissolve these imaginings and withdraw these projections to experience what actually is, reality: dimensionless Awareness, of which and “in” which the world is an expression.

The Spiritual path is basically a reorientation away from delusion and illusion toward truth and reality.

Spiritual practice and living is the discarding of what is false and illusory, and the practice and living of what is true and real.

Reality is existence as it actually is. Most of us do not simply experience reality, what actually is. Instead, due to attachments, we shut out the experience of the infinite-eternal Awareness which is the depth of reality; and upon the remaining surface, of finite experiences, we superimpose—for the most part unconsciously—ideas, often delusions, and imaginings, often illusions, about reality, about what actually is. To a large degree, the Spiritual path is the discarding and dissolving of these attachments and superimpositions upon reality, upon existence as it actually is. To a large degree, Spiritual-Realisation is the experience of reality, existence as it actually is, free of our individual attachments, ideas and imaginings about reality.

Self-Realisation is “just” ordinary or normal consciousness, but free of attachments, delusions and illusions.

In various ways her Spiritual practices are eroding and wearing away the thickened accretions of millennia of delusions, illusions and related attachments until they completely fall away to reveal Reality.

To experience experience as it is, that is, to experience what actually is, that is, to experience reality, we need to remove our attachments to finite experiences, and, remove our superimposition of delusions and illusions about reality. But, the main thing here is to remove our *delusions* through truth, for it is the delusions which underlie and generate the attachments and the illusions.

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12. Truth, Reality and the Ego

Initially, we begin our inquiry into truth and reality upon a foundation of delusion and illusion—upon unquestioned and false assumptions and imaginings about what is true and real.

It is *almost* a catch-twenty two situation, where the search for truth begins and proceeds in a context of assumed but mistaken “truths” about the nature of reality—mis-beliefs about matter, time, space, causality, about who or what one is, on so forth—‘almost’, but not completely, because from time to time the light of grace from the Soul breaks through.

At the outset of this search, you should be acutely aware that there is part of yourself, that part identified with the ego, which does *not* want the truth.

At the outset of the search for truth, it is important to recognise that there is a part of you which is *deeply* committed to *not* finding the truth, that part which has a life and death commitment to perpetuating illusion—the depth and tenacity of this commitment only becomes fully clear as the journey unfolds.

For the ego, it’s more important to be “right” than to find the truth—in fact it cannot afford to uncover the truth.

There is no full realisation of truth and reality yet, quite simply, because there are aspects of his psyche, delusions and illusions, largely unconscious, which do not want and cannot bear truth and reality.

Identified with the ego, we cannot bear too much reality.

Identification with the ego, an individual entity, is really just a wrong way of thinking and imagining ourselves to be; and egoistic thinking, desire, emotion and behaviour is simply that type of self-expression which occurs due to this wrong way of thinking and imagining ourselves to be.

Most of us, at a very deep level, both consciously and subconsciously, believe in and experience that we *are* the ego and possibly the body. We take this deluded and illusory perspective as true and real, and so we hang onto it and all that supports it with tremendous energy and tenacity. Here, truth and reality are deeply unwelcome.

To *seriously* investigate and discern the illusion of identity with the ego is to shake the foundations of your world.

Identity with the ego, and living out the ego's view of life, is largely and essentially a structure of delusional beliefs and illusions, and so, the ego is constantly engaged in defending itself and its life *against* truth and reality.

In the midst of what is, reality, the ego revolves in its little dark world of delusion and illusion desperately defending itself.

The ego will only seek the truth to the degree that it does not feel significantly threatened.

Misidentified with the ego—a personality structure and corresponding self-image constellated around a sense or knowing of 'I'-ness—we are engaged in a perpetual battle to maintain and enlarge it as true and real—something which involves the avoidance of truth and reality. In this regard the ego has a number of strategies and subterfuges, all of which we all engage in to some degree: distraction, avoidance, denial, apathy, repression, suppression, rejection, attachment, manipulation, projection, attack, rationalization, imagination, and fabrication.

The ego maintains and strengthens its identifications and positions by defending them, by externalising its faults through projection, by failing to take responsibility, by compulsively reacting and acting out its delusions, and through remaining unaware or unconscious. A Soulful approach is to see through these subterfuges and, instead, make the truth of one's experience, and the living of it, paramount.

Identification of oneself as the ego, or with the ego as being the primary aspect of oneself, is fundamentally untrue and unreal, and so the ego is not interested in, indeed, actively avoids fundamental truth and reality.

There is almost always part of us—ignorant, attached and fearful—which is not committed to truth or growth, but to keeping things as they are, even if they are not so good.

We must remember, that much of our continued learning and growth acquired at our normal, conscious level, can and will then be used by ego, particularly at a subconscious level, to maintain itself.

Because identification with the ego is untrue and unreal, devotion to what is true and real will inevitably lead to confronting and dissolving this identification.

Dedication to the truth entails the deepest courage, for an essential aspect of this dedication is exposing the delusions and illusions of the ego, including the illusion of being the ego itself, and also, of letting go of the attachments based upon these delusions and illusions.

Although deepening, and ultimately, infinite peace and joy are the outcome of this process of exposing illusions and releasing attachments, much suffering is also inherent with in it, and for this great courage is needed.

Sometimes out upon the broad sunlit plains, at other times stumbling through the darkness of the labyrinth with only the dim lantern of hope in my hand, such has been my search for reality and truth. I suspect that initially it is more or less the same for all others.

The ego will undertake the most sophisticated, complex, painful and arduous endeavours rather than *directly* and *fully* confront the simple truth of its own illusory nature.

The ego loves to think about truth rather than to live it—which would spell its demise.

The ego has a huge investment in the non-essential—in that which keeps us away from what is most needed, and away from what is more true and real.

The ego seeks Enlightenment by any means other than what works.

The ego is committed to the *appearance* of commitment.

The ego contrives to do as much as it possibly can do on the Spiritual path, without actually doing anything.

The ego may do as much as possible to avoid Spiritual work. When this battle is lost it becomes more cunning: it “commits” to the Spiritual path by doing as much as possible while doing as little as possible—circumventing the crucial work; and whatever is achieved, such as deeper experiences of authentic power, inspired creativity or uplifting beauty, it appropriates to itself, or *as* itself.

Upon the limited domain of experience which the ego allows, overlain with its delusions and illusions, we attempt to understand our lives, and to conduct our lives upon that “understanding”.

Most of us, much of the time, are trying to get life to conform to our delusions and illusions.

Trying to make an illusion work—the normal way people attempt to find happiness, love and peace.

Believing oneself to be finite forms; believing that love, joy, beauty, peace, power,

and reality can truly, ultimately, be found in finite forms; lost in finite forms—this is the condition of the dreamer.

The more deeply she sees that she has been living in delusion and illusion, identified with a dream figure, lost in a dream, condemned to suffer, the more deeply she longs for truth and reality and to live in truth and reality.

When do we dis-attach from the ego? When we *clearly and deeply see* the falsehood that we are the ego, and, the inevitable and perpetual suffering and emptiness involved in the attempt to maintain that identity.

While we can engage in many sorts of practices to dissolve identity with the ego, essentially, we must *clearly and deeply understand* the nature of the ego-identity, its falsity, how it maintains itself, and the consequences of this identification. In doing so, we *automatically* adhere to what is seen as true, necessary, constructive and which promotes well-being—or do so with some application of the will—and avoid what is seen to be false, unnecessary, destructive, and causative of suffering.

We must give the ego its place. It is only a well-developed ego that will seriously and effectively seek for the realisation of the Soul, be open and receptive to the Soul, be able to relate to, embody and express the gifts of the Soul in a full and healthy way, and eventually be able to surrender itself to the Soul. By ‘well-developed’ we mean, on the one hand, that there has been attenuation of identification with and attachment to the ego, and of attachments in general, and on the other hand, a development of the various powers and capacities of the ego, or which work through the ego, such as intuition, reason, intelligence and will.

Spiritual work will bring up the darkness of our egoistic and animal natures, as well as the light of our Spiritual nature. Wisdom is needed to manage both effectively: not to be overtaken or disillusioned by the darkness but to resolve or diminish it; and not to become inflated or imbalanced by the light, but to keep it pure or free of attachments, balanced, not excessive, and integrated with the rest of our nature.

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13. Philosophy

Literally, philosophy means the love (*philo*) of wisdom (*sophia*).

In the ancient sense, the Philosopher or Sage is someone who is Enlightened, that is, someone who knows the Truth of Reality or existence by being that existence, and also, someone who can rationally explain, as far as reason can explain, the nature of Truth and Reality.

The accomplished Philosopher is able to sort appearances (or illusions) from reality, and able to rationally explain this to others.

As we proceed, we come to draw a distinction between intelligence and wisdom.

Intelligence is more about the purely rational understanding of the nature of our experiences, particularly the physical world, and particularly its causal laws. It is also more about the manipulation of this conceptual understanding to in turn manipulate experiences to produce outcomes as quickly and efficiently as possible. As such, intelligence actually involves a number of delusions and assumptions. But, wisdom is to know the fundamental *truths* about what actually is, reality—its origin, being, laws, and direction—where this knowing can come through insights arising from direct experience, through the insights of intuition, through reason (whose essence is intuition), or through knowing-by-being.

Wisdom may be said to be a higher, deeper or more fundamental form of intelligence.

The deeper or more fundamental our discernment of what is true and real, the more we move from intelligence to wisdom.

Intelligence without wisdom is a danger to oneself and to others; but wisdom knows how and when to develop and employ intelligence.

There may be great intelligence or understanding regarding the world and life, yet, this understanding may be used, consciously or unconsciously, to harm oneself and others—obviously a deeper understanding, wisdom, is yet required.

Intelligence and capacity without wisdom—the most dangerous situation.

To assert that philosophy is irrelevant, impractical or unimportant, is to say that wisdom is all of these things.

Many people like to be practical, and find philosophical considerations to be a waste of time, as if their so-called practicality did not occur within, and was not influenced by, a philosophical framework—half-conscious and half-thought out though it may be.

There are many and various exhortations in our culture to get out into the world and do something practical to assist others, as if the wisdom to do it in the right way, at the right time, at the right speed, in the right place, and with the right people, is magically going to take care of itself. Balance is needed.

So many exhortations to be tolerant, to respect and love each other, not to hurt but to help one another, and so on, and relatively so few exhortations to be passionate and ardent for wisdom—as if, there can be any deep tolerance, respect, love, compassion, help, and the like, without a corresponding foundation in deep wisdom.

The true philosopher, poet, artist, scientist and prophet are out ahead, quietly laying out the designs upon which the future civilisations will be built and enjoyed.

The act or manifest expression is preceded by the idea.

Wisdom and action are complementary in many ways, for example, wisdom is needed to inform and guide action, and action is needed to verify and deepen wisdom. Both are needed, and both must be cultivated. While in a given life or in a given time there tends to be an emphasis on one or the other, overall, there is an oscillation, and balancing between, these two poles.

Experience and reflection need to be balanced and integrated.

Deeper philosophical investigation into the nature of reality—such as metaphysics, ontology and epistemology—may be regarded as a waste of time. But, if our view of reality is fundamentally incorrect, and we attempt to live according to our delusions and illusions, can we really hope to avoid unnecessary suffering, and to find deep and lasting fulfilment?

In-depth reason reveals that we are infinite and eternal Awareness in which the ego, body and world appear as a succession of dependent experiences. But many people believe that they are a consciousness, more specifically, an ego, enclosed in and dependent upon a physical brain, which in turn resides in a physical body, which in turn is located within a physical world extended through space and time, where all of this has come about by chance. If this is so, then what chance do they have of real happiness, love, peace and fulfilment by living in accord with such gross delusions and illusions?

Metaphysics, the study of reality, may seem far removed from and even irrelevant to everyday life, but while we are wrongly identified with and attached to the ego, and do not realise that *all* of us *are* essentially One Divine Awareness, we will continue to ignore, shun, devalue, attack and even kill each “other”, and fail to embrace, value, care for and assist each other.

The normal view of reality is a state of delusion and illusion. As such, it is inherently, unavoidably problematic, that is, inherently bound up with suffering.

Most people are trying to make their illusions work; while the philosopher is trying to escape from them.

In the end, a narrow philosophy of life will not do, for any philosophy which neglects significant areas of our lives will naturally not be able to help us when we are moving through those regions.

A serious metaphysical path requires not merely intellectual sophistication and subtlety, but equally importantly, an open mind and heart, and a courageous spirit, for truths will be uncovered which will overturn one’s “reality”, one’s life, thereby

leading to another.

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14. Exposing the Delusions and Illusions of the Ego-Centred View of Reality

A philosophy of life which does not promise what Life actually promises, the realisation of oneself as the Soul with all that this entails, will not really satisfy.

Can the Heart really be at peace and at rest with a philosophy of life which is depressing, evokes fear, and is found to be frustrating of our deepest aspirations? Many materialistic, atheistic, existential, nihilistic and sceptical philosophies, if accepted, mean that we need to accept a view of life which is inherently depressing, frightening and frustrating—but is this acceptable to the Heart?

Who or what am I? Where have I come from? Where am I going? Is there any fundamental purpose to my life? The prevailing belief appears—at least upon a *superficial* glance—to be an increasingly materialistic view that we are nothing more than a brief and accidental flickering of awareness which, in the ultimate analysis, has come about like all else from the blind and random banging together of particles. Sitting tucked away in some dark corner of a brain and dependent upon it, essentially separated from the world and others, we await our inevitable end when we shall be reabsorbed into matter. In the interim we find what meaning and morality we can, or that we can make up, so that we can manage in an ultimately capricious world, to assuage but not really heal, the inevitable and deep losses we all endure, and to find some pale semblance of real well-being. Can the heart *really* be accepting of, and at peace with, such a philosophy of life which, upon even a superficial analysis, is shown to be inherently and inevitably depressing, fear provoking and frustrating?

Over and over I have been told, basically, that I am a flickering flame of awareness tucked away in some dark corner of the brain, conditioned by and dependent upon it. I am there by accident, but it is certain that in a short time I will be extinguished for good. In the meantime, here I sit, alone in my small dark box, receiving second hand and distorted messages from an outside world, including from others who are sitting in their boxes. But, somehow I don't feel happy about this situation—perhaps the chemistry of my brain is wrong?

Once we are consciously aware of the fundamentals of what may be called the materialistic-atheistic view of reality, we can see more clearly the inherently depressing, frustrating and fear-provoking nature of such a view of “reality”. What follows is a generalised view of such a reality.... The world, indeed the universe and we as part of it, are here *by accident*. Everything has come about, ultimately, from the *literally* mindless banging together of sub-atomic particles, or the equally blind interaction of waves of energy. Somehow, by accident, *order* has arisen out

of disorder. By chance, from out of original chaos, blind matter has organised itself into increasingly complex systems from atoms, up through ecosystems, to entire galaxies, all ruled by discernible laws. What are we exactly? When, by accident, matter reached a certain degree of order, the blind banging together of particles produced another accident: awareness or consciousness—that which we are. More specifically, awareness has come forth from the blind banging together of the non-aware particles of the brain. So, it seems, we are basically the matter of the body which has somehow transformed itself into awareness—something that it, matter, did not itself possess, and something which is *greater* than matter! Being produced by the body we are dependent upon the body, and we will cease forever when the body dies. However, in the meantime we live our lives. What are these? Life is just continuing to unfold in its essentially accidental way—apart from this there is no meaning or purpose to our lives except what we can create. So then, where does our value lie? It is dependent on what we decide—usually it is based on what someone is or can offer in terms of qualities or skills. But for many this appears to be little, and for all, tentative. Likewise, there is no good or bad apart from what we arbitrarily decide. Likewise, there is no justice or fairness to life, apart from what we designate as ‘just’, and what we can execute or carry out along those lines. When the hard blows of life fall upon us, or those about whom we care, there is no deeper perspective by which we can really see many of them in a positive light—sadness and resignation result. We cannot fundamentally trust life, but need to be forever vigilant in our efforts to control it—anxiety and tiredness result. Can the Heart really be at peace and at rest with such a philosophy of life?

The way most people live is to have passively accepted a false and, when fully seen, profoundly depressing view of reality—including of who they are—and then attempt to make the most of it, hoping that luck is on their side.

Is a human life a situation where we make the most of a bad situation, or the promise of something truly wonderful?

Most of us have a deeply flawed view of reality, and as part of this view, believe in the limitations of this view—limitations in terms of what we are, what we can be, what we can do, and what we can experience. As we deepen our view of reality, deepen in truth, we free ourselves from our self-imposed limitations involved in our flawed view of reality, and open to wonderful possibilities, and indeed, certainties.

If the mind and heart are free and open, there is magic everywhere.

A sad philosophy is a wrong “philosophy”, at best, an incomplete one.

A sad philosopher is one who has not yet found the truth of life, and so, is not yet worthy of the title ‘philosopher’ as a lover (*philos*) of truth (*sophia*).

When he has heard their Souless picture of life, he may well ask himself, ‘Is this all? Is *this* worth it?’

Are we essentially Divine or essentially matter? Which of these uplifts the heart, bestows dignity, inspires hope, imparts strength, and brings peace?

Are we nothing more than the excrescence or epiphenomenon or emanation of unaware, senseless particles and waves blindly banging against, or interacting with, each other, or, is not awareness, intelligence, love, beauty, compassion, humour, creativity and virtue, our humanity, far *greater* than matter, and which therefore, could not have come from matter as that which is far less?

We have reversed the truth and come to believe that matter is real—primary, independent and permanent—and that awareness is unreal—secondary, dependent and transitory. Having reversed the truth, we are attempting to live out our lives.

Matter has now been put first, and awareness, as that which is derived from and dependent upon matter, second, and therefore with a much reduced status—stripped of its Divinity. As Awareness we have surrendered our primacy, self-sufficiency and Reality to matter. It *seems* we are now essentially matter. And so we cling to, and bow before matter, or more accurately, to the experiences we take to be material. So often, material accumulation and security come before truth, integrity, love, compassion, beauty, and peace.

We have sought to reduce the miracle, magic and mystery of life to mindless matter.

Matter, as that which is independent of and external to awareness, is only a delusion and an illusion, a false belief and an imagined thing. Matter is *only* a wrong assumption or inference—and the associated imaginings—based on our experiences in awareness, which is all that we can experience.

Matter exists, but only in the imagination.

The world exists, but not as we imagine it to be: ‘We ordinarily think of physical reality as solid matter, of objects existing on their own. In terms of objective reality, there is no such thing, but this does not mean that there is nothing there. The forms exist, but in a different way than we had thought. They exist as articulations that are expressions of the creativity of Being.’—A. H. Almaas.

To question the existence of matter is to question the “reality” of most people.

Take a handful of metal lumps, or of rocks, or of particles of dirt, or of drops of water, etc., and keep knocking them together. Will they ever produce awareness? No. So why should smaller or minute pieces or particles *which are essentially the same stuff* be able to produce awareness?

Matter is held to be *other* than mind (or awareness). But, if this is so, mind could not come forth from matter, for here mind would actually have no source. If, to escape the objection, mind or awareness is held to *be* matter, then this is *equally* to say that matter *is* mind. If it is contended that mind is held to be a form or

transformation of matter, then what this *really* means is that mind *is* matter but in a different form, which is to say, that mind is some sort of reconfiguration or rearrangement or shaping of matter. But again, this is to say that mind *is* matter, and equally, if this is so, that matter *is* mind. So, all that we have is mind or awareness, call it what you will.

Mind or awareness is held to be a *transformation* of matter. ‘Transformation’ means a rearrangement or reconfiguration of matter. What is matter here? Spatial particles, albeit very small. Yet, most states of awareness are not spatial and therefore cannot be composed of spatial material particles. The only way that states of awareness could be held to be a transformation of matter would be if matter was composed of non-spatial entities. But then, would this be matter or awareness?

There is intelligence in the universe, clearly in Man, but also, clearly in the workings of Nature, from the orbits of atomic particles up through to the rotations of the heavens. Are we to believe, as the materialist would have us believe, that this intelligence has arisen out of matter? Are we to believe that the greater, intelligence, has arisen out of the lesser, non-intelligent matter? If it is said that matter *is* intelligent, two replies must be made. First, it is agreed by materialists that the universe has arisen from matter *by accident*, not deliberation or pre-existing design. If the universe has arisen by accident then, by definition, no intelligence, specifically, on the part of matter, has been involved. Second, what would intelligence be for matter which, by definition, has *no awareness*? What sense could we make of the concept of intelligence without awareness? Is this not self-contradictory? Such “intelligence” in matter could only be an organisation of particles (or waves) grouped together and blindly interacting with each other. Is that intelligence?

The material reductionist theory of the evolution of man from matter is refuted by the truth that the greater *cannot* come from the lesser.

Matter and mind (or awareness) are generally held to be *totally other*. However, if this is so, the mind cannot come from matter, for something cannot come from that which is totally other, for here, there is *nothing* of the supposed product, mind, to be found in the supposed source, matter. If mind or awareness was to come from matter, then matter must *be* mind or awareness. Yet, materialists would not want to say this. Mind or awareness cannot come from matter which is totally other.

Matter, defined as that which is not mind or awareness, does not possess intelligence or wisdom, for intelligence or wisdom *requires* awareness.

Which is the more intelligent position, that intelligence is of or from that which is intelligent, or of or from that which lacks intelligence?

If we are to believe the materialist then life is essentially lifeless—an expression of lifeless matter.

Which is greater, life or non-life? And yet the materialist would have us believe that life comes from lifeless matter—the greater from the lesser.

Which is greater, consciousness or unconsciousness? The former. That which is greater cannot come from that which is lesser, for this is tantamount to something coming from nothing. Therefore, consciousness cannot come from that which is unconscious, including so-called matter.

Order from chaos; awareness from non-awareness or consciousness from unconsciousness; free-will from determinism; intelligence from blindness; life from lifelessness: ‘The greater from the lesser’—forever the materialist’s irrational cry.

The materialist believes that our illuminating wisdom and our noble integrity both come, directly or indirectly, from particles blindly banging against each other.

To ascertain the conceptual or rational truth, we consciously compare our belief regarding an experience to the experience which the belief concerns, to discern if the belief *accurately* describes or matches the experience. If the belief matches the experience we have the insight that the belief is true, and if it does not match, that it is false. However, for the materialist, this insight, like all thoughts, is produced by the brain. Here, it must be understood that the brain cannot *consciously* hold two experiences, a belief and the experience which the belief is about, to compare them and produce an insight, for the brain is *not conscious* to make this comparison and thus to produce this insight. Thus, for the Materialist, the brain is supposed to come up with this insight, regarding the truth or falsity of a belief, without awareness—blindly. This is to say that conceptual or rational truth, including the conviction involved, is nothing but a blind working of the brain. Supposedly, what has occurred is that the belief about an experience and the experience which the belief or thought is about, have resulted in a chemical reaction in the brain to produce the so-called insight of the brain which declares the belief to be true or false. Here, the so-called truth, including the conviction that goes with it, is simply a determination of the brain. Now, what value has truth, or so-called truth, if it is but a causal determination of the brain or matter? First, it is not an accurate insight into the nature of one’s experience where *we* judge this accuracy, it is simply a determination of the brain, produced by a chemical reaction. In what sense could it be said that *the brain* produces true insights, where these beliefs regarding experience are said to accurate? The brain has no consciousness, it simply produces beliefs based on chemical reactions; it knows nothing about the accuracy of beliefs. Second, when *we* become conscious of a true belief—produced by the brain—our conviction that it is accurate is none of our doing; we have no choice but to believe it. Here, the truth is determined for us, not by us; it is something that we cannot not believe; and it may be re-determined for us tomorrow. The “truth” here is tantamount to nothing more than a spell cast upon us by a magician; a spell in which we believe, and cannot not believe, while it lasts—an illusion.

If every mental state is a product of the brain or matter, as Materialists *must* believe, then this means that our so-called truthful insights are nothing but

determinations of the brain or matter. Here, the so-called truth, including the conviction that goes with it, is simply a determination of the brain which one cannot not believe. This means that if the matter of the brain is disposed in a different way tomorrow, then it may determine another so-called truthful insight which is *contrary* to one's current "truth". For example, the Materialist may come to believe that Materialism is a load of rubbish.

If we are to believe the materialist that awareness and its capacities derive from matter, then the inevitable corollary is that awareness and its states are a product of matter, *are* matter, and are subject to the causally determined relationships of matter. Here, an inevitable corollary is that free-choice or free-will is an illusion; so too moral responsibility which rests on the capacity to make free choices.

A free choice between two or more options cannot be determined or caused for then it won't be *free*. Thus, a free choice is a decision that arises from oneself without any preceding cause or determination; this is to say that a free choice is a *spontaneous* expression from oneself. A free choice is a spontaneous expression from oneself in response to the options of which one is aware.

A free-choice may simply be between two or more past, stored and reactively evoked (or conditioned) opinions or views, or, between one of these and the voice of the Higher Self or Soul. Some, like Plotinus, would say that obeying the voice of the Higher Soul is the only truly free choice.

From the sufficiently clear insight and deep conviction of what is the right or integrous way, we freely choose that way, which is to say, a *spontaneous* decision comes forth from the Awareness that we are, and, depending on the clarity of insight and depth of conviction, there emerges also a spontaneous degree of associated power, what we call will-power, to execute that decision. Free choice and will-power are expressed through, but more or less limited by, the body.

The belief that we, as awareness with all of its qualities, have come from matter, is such an irrational and enervating position, that one suspects that it is not simply due to a lack of intellectual rigour, but that deep conditioning, attachments, pride, anxieties and anger are also more or less involved.

If the whole current and purpose of our lives is for us to come into the ever greater realisation and expression of our Spiritual nature, then we must wonder at the suffering which atheists and materialists, who deny the Spiritual and knowingly or unknowingly persuade others to do the same, are creating for themselves and others.

In light of modern science, in particular, quantum physics and relativity theory, we no longer know what the term 'matter' means—we can form no intelligible or sensible and coherent or harmonious notion of it. A term is not meaningful if we do not know what it stands for, and such is the term 'matter'. Likewise to say that consciousness comes from matter is a meaningless statement for we are saying that consciousness comes from something which, for us, is meaningless, of which we

have no intelligible or coherent understanding. We might as well say that consciousness comes from gibbidygoggle—meaningless.

It would seem that the materialist, being able to see, touch and feel matter all around him, has a great advantage over the person who believes in a God which cannot be seen, touched or felt. And yet, it must be pointed out again and again, that *all* that the materialist sees, touches and feels, all that he or she ever experiences and *can* experience is not matter, but awareness—and from this starting point, the existence of matter is but speculation or, at best, a mistaken inference. However, the person who believes that God is awareness is never experiencing anything other.

The materialist might assert that it is pretty much self-evident that the body causes effects within, and produces, the mind or awareness. Certainly, the body has an effect upon the mind, but this is *not* to say that the body is the source and cause of the mind or awareness. This is to conflate and confuse two things. I can throw a pebble into the sea and it will have an effect such as causing ripples, but the pebble does not produce the sea. Also, we could reverse the position and say that the mind has an effect on the body and therefore causes or produces the body; but the materialist certainly wouldn't be happy with this conclusion.

If the body is a vehicle through which awareness or consciousness of another expresses itself to us, then when that vehicle dies, and we can no longer apprehend consciousness expressing itself to us, it is illogical for us to conclude that the awareness or consciousness of that other person no longer exists; all we can say is that consciousness now lacks a way of expressing itself and revealing itself to us.

Empirically, there is no evidence that matter produces consciousness. All we have ever observed by the coming together of material particles, no matter how small or large, is their modification, building up, breaking down, or increase or decrease in number. We do observe that the body produces *effects* in consciousness, but this is not to say that matter is the *source* and *origin* of consciousness or conscious states and *produces* them from itself. We *also* observe that the mind produces effects in the body or matter—but the Materialist would not want to say that mind is the source and origin of matter or produces matter from itself. Empirically, we find a correlation between body and mind states—nothing more.

The fundamental flaw and delusion of Materialism, and of all philosophies and theories based on Materialism such as evolutionary biology, is that material particles knocking around off of each other can produce awareness or consciousness.

What is the relationship between matter (or body) and mind? So-called material states are actually a subset of states in Awareness—a subset often called objective, and often wrongly thought of as external to Awareness. So-called mind states, namely, thoughts, feelings, sense perceptions, desires, aspirations, memories and imaginings, are another subset of states in Awareness—a subset often called subjective, and often accurately thought of as internal to Awareness. The states

within a given subset influence and bring about each other; and also, the states within each of these two subsets—material or objective and mind or subjective— influence and bring about each other—this is commonly called the mind-body or mind-matter interaction. The manner of ‘influence and bringing about’ here is more accurately described as *inducement* or *attraction* rather than causation (as one thing being determined by another) or causative-production (of one thing being produced from another). Always, all the states arise out of and are produced by Awareness.

What is the relationship between awareness and the brain? So-called matter only exists as states of awareness; in particular, the brain and body are a complex of states within and produced by awareness. The brain does *not* cause i.e. necessarily determine, nor produce awareness. However, the brain’s condition does influence the manner in which awareness expresses itself as what we commonly call the ‘mind’, that is, as the totality of thoughts, feelings, sense perceptions, needs, desires, aspirations, memories and imaginings. The condition of the brain will influence what mind states appear in two basic ways. First, the condition of the brain will modify or influence the form in which *pre-existing* mind states, from our subconscious levels, enter our normal awareness. Second, the condition of the brain, while not producing or causing mind states in our normal awareness, will help attract or induce them in this awareness, and also modify or shape them as it does so. Thus, we can say that the brain is both a transmitter and reflector of pre-existing mind states (from the subconscious), modifying them as it does, and also, an attractor or inducer of mind states, modifying them as it does. But, to reiterate, the brain does not cause or produce awareness or its mind states.

According to the materialist, the awareness that I am goes unconscious at night. However, to say that the awareness is unconscious is an oxymoron, because awareness *is* consciousness. If, at night, there is unconsciousness then there is no awareness, which means that I, as awareness, will cease to exist. If I no longer exist as awareness then where do I go at night, for something, awareness, oneself, cannot become nothing? The materialist will say that awareness returns to being matter, which he asserts is the source of awareness. This is tantamount to saying that at night, awareness, oneself, returns to being the flesh of the brain, only to be reborn anew the next day. But, each morning, are you not fundamentally the *same* you that you were yesterday, the day before, and so on? The materialist would say that it is memory which allows this continuity of self to occur. But, if I am newly born in the morning, how is it that I can remember my memories from the previous day? For surely when these memories are presented to the new me, which, being new, was not present at the original events of which there are now memories, I would not and could not recognise the memories *as memories*. Instead, for the new me, the “memories” would be totally new experiences, not memories. Our conclusion is that as consciousness or awareness we continue to exist even in sleep, but for some reason we cannot recall this fact.

Something cannot *come from* what is *other*, for it would in fact have no source. Thus, awareness cannot come from matter—at birth or at any other time—where matter is *other* than awareness. If awareness did come from matter, then awareness would *be* matter, for it has no other source. Yet, in this situation matter would also

be awareness. Awareness remains awareness. Next, something cannot *change into* what is *other*, for the other would, in fact, have no source. And so awareness cannot change into matter—at death or any other time—where matter is *other* than awareness. Awareness remains awareness. *If* awareness did become matter, then matter, having its only source in awareness would *be* awareness. Awareness remains awareness. Finally, something, such as awareness, cannot become nothing. In sum: awareness remains awareness, that is, awareness is Immortal.

That one exists is the deepest and most widespread of truths; that one exists as the ego is the deepest and most widespread of delusions.

The ego is the sense or knowing of ‘I-ness mixed up and associated with a personality and perhaps the body, and also, with a self-image or concept which corresponds with this composite. We are not the ego. The essential reason for this is quite simple: the ego may not be present, but oneself, in some way, will be, therefore, oneself is not the ego. The situation can be elaborated in more detail. We are not the ego as a *self-image* because: one, the self-image is an imaginary thing, built in imagination, and we are not imaginary; two, we are the one who has the power to use the imagination to construct the self-image (or deconstruct or change it) in the imagination; three, the self-image is frequently not present when, for some reason, the imagination is not working, however we *remain* present. We are present but the self-image is not, therefore we are not the self-image. Also, we are not the ego as the personality structure of which the self-image is a reflection because: frequently, *none* of the mental states which constitute the personality are present in awareness, but we are present, therefore we are not the personality or ego; two, in some way we are always, or at least often, *fully* present, however, only one part of the personality, one mental state such as love or hate or humour, can be present at any given time. We are fully present but the personality is not fully present, therefore we are not ego as the personality. Finally, we are not even the core of the ego which is the sense of ‘I’ because frequently the sense or knowing of being an ‘I’ is not present in awareness but oneself is nonetheless present. Constantly we are involved in activities where the sense or knowing of being an ‘I’ is not present, yet certainly, in some way, we are still there, present, during those activities.

To the question ‘Who are you, precisely?’, most people will probably respond by more or less clearly identifying a self-image of who they are, or a list of characteristics or experiences which constitute their personality structure. Here, imagination, memory and identification of mental states are involved. But if I ask you, ‘Do you *exist*?’, then the answer is an immediate and unequivocal ‘yes’; in some way you are present, fully present, *before* any imaginings, memories or mental states, pertaining to the personality, are brought to mind. These are not required for you to know that you exist. This is to say that you do not need to refer to a self-image or personality structure as a set of characteristics or mental states to know that you exist.

The normal sense or knowing of ‘I’ is the core of the ego, without it there would be no sense of being an individual and no focus for the rest of the ego to congregate

around. As we mature from infants into adults, and for the most part unconsciously, we select out various mental states from the totality of our experiences—a selection which is collectively and commonly called the personality—associate them with the ‘I’ and take them to be the self.

We are not always aware of the sense of being an individual. For example, when we are intensely involved in an activity the sense of being an individual or ‘I’ fades into the background and may completely disappear. However, one is always present as awareness, for essentially, we are Awareness.

Our sense or knowing of being an ‘I’ is *not* always present, but consciousness or awareness *per se* is always present, and, at these times, we are still present, for we are consciousness or awareness *per se*.

In mindfulness meditation we may watch or witness the sense or knowing of being an ‘I’ arise and fade, *yet we remain unchanged*—this reveals a great mystery about That which we really are.

Essentially, we are formless awareness. One category of existence which manifests within this awareness is the I-consciousness. When it arises, formless awareness now has the capacity to know itself as an individualised awareness. However, close observation and analysis shows that this knowing or sense of being an individual comes and goes within awareness; whereas the condition of being awareness *per se* always remains, for this is what we essentially are.

With regard to all of our changing or particular experiences there is a common and therefore unchanging element: awareness itself. Awareness itself is that which is common to all of our particular experiences without itself being particular or limited in any way—it is without dimensions. By its very (dimensionless) nature we cannot describe or point out awareness *itself* to others, but each of us can experience it directly as the common, unchanging and dimensionless element of all of our changing experiences.

The personality structure exists as a constellation of psychological states, or states of awareness, but what is it constellated about? The feeling or sense or knowing of being an ‘I’, an individual. If we can deepen this sense of ‘I’ it will take us back to the Higher Self, and in turn to the Higher Soul. The ‘I’ or Individuality is the first manifestation out of the formless Awareness which is the ground of the Higher Soul. The Individuality may be transcended so that we simply know ourselves as formless Awareness. We may reverse the process. From out of the Soul as formless Awareness the ‘I’ or Individuality appears. Here the ‘I’ is an aspect of the Higher Soul. The ‘I’ is then reflected down to be the centre of the Higher *Self*. It is then reflected down once more to be the centre of our ego or personality. The ego or personality, as a group of psychological states, forms or constellates around the ‘I’.

We can transcend our false identification with the body and with the ego. We can even transcend the experience of being an ‘I’ or individual centre of awareness. But, as a Soul, we cannot transcend being formless Awareness, for this is what we

essentially are.

When formless Awareness is realised—as the essential condition of Enlightenment—our normal sense of ‘I’ or ‘I’-ness will still remain, for the ‘I’ is a category of existence inherent to the Awareness that we are, just as the colour blue or the experience of love are categories of existence and will remain for the same reason. However, in the Enlightened condition it is self-evident that one is not *essentially* the ‘I’, even at the deepest level of the Soul, instead, one is essentially formless Awareness. Through meditation practice or inner work the sense of ‘I’ can be “traced” back to its deeper level of the Higher Self and finally to the Higher Soul where the ‘I’ or Individuality is known to be the *first* manifestation of formless Awareness.

Essentially, one is the Soul as dimensionless Awareness. Here, Awareness Knows Itself as Awareness simply by Being Itself as Awareness—Knowing-by-Being. There is *only one* “thing” here, Awareness which is Knowing Itself by Being Itself. We can also say that the Soul as pure Awareness has intrinsic Self-Knowing. From this Awareness finite or limited forms or experiences manifest and appear, the *first or primal* of which is the experience of the ‘I’—of being a unique and thus discrete entity. Here, the pure Awareness which is the Soul, and which is Self-Knowing, *also* knows Itself as an Individual Awareness. This occurs at the deepest level of the Soul—what may be called the Higher Soul. The Soul now has an Individual focus or centre within which It will manifest and become aware of further experiences. The *lowest* phase of the Soul, the human being, receives, from the Higher Soul, the knowing of being an individual or ‘I’, but does so in a *reflected* and *muted* way. This muted sense of ‘I’ is our normal sense or knowing of ‘I’ or ‘I’-ness. This ‘I’ then becomes mixed up with a personality structure and, quite often, the body. Collectively these are the ego, and the ego is mistaken as being oneself.

The Higher Soul Knows Itself as Awareness simply by being that Awareness—Knowing-by-Being. The Higher Soul also Knows Itself as an Individual or ‘I’ simply by being that ‘I’ which is the first manifestation out of Awareness. This Knowing of the Soul is immediate and self-evident. At the *human* level of the Soul we receive a muted reflection of this Knowing of the Higher Soul as our normal, immediate and self-evident knowing of being awareness and, of being an individualised awareness.

Our immediate and indisputable sense or feeling or knowing of existing as awareness—usually attributed to the ego—is the ever-present fragrance of the Soul as pure Awareness, of the Soul’s inherent Self-Knowing.

We are not the ‘I’; we are the formless Awareness. The ‘I’ gives the capacity for this Awareness to know Itself in a new way—as an individual awareness. The ‘I’ is a manifestation and function of Awareness. Of course, Awareness can know Itself without the ‘I’ as formless Awareness.

Is it not self-evident that *in some way* we are always the same, unchanged?

When we consider arguments for the position that we are in some way an unchanging awareness, we must discern and discriminate clearly between those which argue for and conclude that we are unchanging and *formless* Awareness, and those which argue and conclude that we are unchanging and *individualised* awareness. The former position is always true, but in regard to our normal awareness, the latter position is not true, or at least, it requires serious qualification.

It is the sense or knowing of being an 'I' which is the core of the ego, without the 'I' there would be no centre around which the rest of the ego could form. Also, it is the 'I' which is the primary thing which gives *the ego* its sense of being permanent or unchanged. However, the 'I', which is the core of the ego, is *intermittent* in awareness—it is not always present. So why is the 'I' seen as permanent? Although the 'I' is intermittent, when it does appear it is the "same" 'I'. Using the memory, we link up these "same" 'I' experiences to conclude that the 'I' is always not just the same, but *unchanged*. All of this can occur because our normal sense or knowing of being an 'I' is a muted reflection of a deeper 'I' or Individuality which *does* abide in an unchanging, indeed eternal, way, as part of the Higher Soul. Our normal and intermittent experiences of being an 'I', of 'I'-ness, are all reflections of this deeper and unchanging 'I' or Individuality, and so all of these reflections are all of the *same* nature. The normal 'I' and the ego built around it are not permanent, but the normal 'I' does reflect a deeper Individuality which is permanent, indeed eternal or timeless.

The 'I' is awareness knowing itself as an individual or individualised awareness. The normal sense of 'I' or 'I'-ness is intermittent, but when it does appear it is always the same. This occurs because this normal sense of 'I' reflects a deeper 'I' or Individuality which *is* always unchanged, indeed, eternal. The normal sense of 'I', as part of normal human awareness, is intermittent or changing, and so it is clearly incorrect to say that we are, at this normal, human level always unchanged *individual* or *individualised* awareness. It is true to say that we are essentially an unchanging and formless awareness, which underlies all our mental states, even those of the intermittent 'I', but not an unchanging *individual* or *individualised* awareness.

When we say that we are always the same 'I', that is, the same individualised awareness, the word 'always' shows that we are referring backwards in time and using memory. Essentially, what we are doing here is saying that when we look back in memory we find that the same 'I' was present at various points in time. Thus, our natural conclusion is that we are always the same *and unchanged* 'I' or individualised awareness. But actually, at the level of normal awareness, we are *not* always an unchanged 'I' or individualised awareness, for the 'I' is intermittent, sometimes present, sometimes not, and in this way the 'I' *does* change. It *is* correct to that each time the 'I' appears it is the same 'I', despite having disappeared and returned, because each knowing of the 'I' is a reflection of a deeper 'I' or Individuality which is an unchanging, indeed eternal or timeless, Individualised Awareness.

If it is basically nothing other than ephemeral mental states, then why does the ego seem so permanent? Here we must look to the core of the ego, the sense or knowing of being 'I'. Not only do we have the constant albeit intermittent knowing of being an 'I' but also, of being the *same* 'I'. Even though the recognition of the 'I' is intermittent, each time it appears it is always the *same* 'I'. Why is this so? This is because our normal sense of 'I' is a muted reflection of an eternal or timeless or unchanging 'I' or Individuality which is intimately associated with the depth of the Soul, the Higher Soul. Our central mistake and illusion is to regard this intermittent, reflected and muted 'I' and what is associated with it, the personality structure and the body, to be the self. No: we are the Individuality that is part of the Higher Soul and more deeply still, we are the formless Awareness which is the Essence of the Higher Soul. And, it is by identifying with and constricting ourselves to the ego that, on the one hand, we close ourselves off from the depth of the Soul and, on the other, cause ourselves so much suffering.

The problem is not the presence of the 'I', for it is a natural part of the human condition. The problem is *mistaking* ourselves to be essentially this 'I' and that with which it is associated, the personality structure and the body, and *attaching* to this complex which is commonly called the ego. The ego, and even the 'I' at its core, is a manifestation and expression of the Soul as formless Awareness—This is our essential nature.

The Divine is the Absolute as that which is completely beyond all finite dimensions. The finite forms of the *manifest* universe are a partial and relative reflection and expression of this Divinity or Reality. The more a finite form is an approximation or expression of the Divine and thus allows the knowing or experiencing of the Divine which underlies it, the more that finite form is said to be real or spiritual. This can be expressed by saying that the more a finite form expresses or reflects or embodies or is transparent to the Divine, the more real or spiritual it is, or the more being it has.

Why do we experience the 'I' as being so real even though it is a thought form which is intermittent, sometimes in awareness and sometimes not? There are two reasons. First, it is the nature of the 'I' that it gives awareness the capacity to know itself as an individual awareness. In part, the reality of the 'I' comes *not* from it, but rather, the reality we experience is actually our partial experience of the Reality which is the formless Awareness with which the 'I' associates (and in which the 'I' manifests). Also, the reality of the 'I' comes from the fact that it expresses, embodies, reflects and is transparent to, to some degree, the Divine which is Reality. Because our normal sense of 'I' embodies or expresses or is transparent to, or reflects the Divine, to some degree, this normal sense of 'I' has a degree of reality. What is the Divine Reality which the 'I' reflects? Our normal sense of 'I' is a reflection of the Quality of Individuality—as part of the Higher Soul—where the Individuality is, in turn, an expression or reflection of a Divine Archetype, namely, the Form of Man.

Is there something real in the ego? Yes. The more the finite forms of the ego are an embodiment and expression of the Soul—as formless Awareness—and the

Qualities of the Soul, including the Quality of Individuality, the more real it is. More generally, the more the finite forms of the ego approximate to, or express, and allow the knowing or experiencing of the Divinity that underlies them, the more real the ego is.

The only thing that is conscious is Consciousness (or Awareness), which is then conscious *of* other things, including an 'I'.

Formless Consciousness may take Itself to be many things, including an 'I' or individualised consciousness, but it is, in truth, formless Consciousness.

For a memory to be *recognised as a memory*, it must be presented to the *same, unchanged* Awareness which was present at the original experience (of which the memory is a copy). This same Awareness, having observed the original experience in the past, is now able to recognise the memory of it in the present. If the same Awareness does not witness the memory, but instead, it is a new or changed awareness, this new awareness would not recognise the memory as a memory, but as a totally new experience. Thus, memory presupposes an unchanging (and thus timeless) Awareness, in addition to the changing and finite experiences of Awareness.

When one recalls a memory, one does not simply recollect a past event or experience but, in addition, one recalls that *oneself* was present at the past event. It is remembering one's presence at the past event which enables one to say that he or she is having a *memory* of it. If, as part of the memory of the event, one could *not* remember oneself being present at the past event, then the memory of the past event would not be regarded as a memory at all. It would be regarded a totally new experience. Furthermore, it must be the *same* or unchanged self which exists now and which is doing the remembering, which was also present in the past at the event which is being recalled. For if it was not the same self which is doing the remembering and which was also present in the past, then it could not be said that the experience one is having is a *memory* of an event, instead, the so-called memory, now being presented to a new self, would appear as a totally new experience. What is the nature of the same, unchanging self here?' It is tempting to say that it is the self as an individualised awareness. However, reflection shows that many if not most of the events of our lives do not occur in close association with the knowing of being an 'I' or individualised awareness, and therefore, when oneself is recalled, in memories, as being present at events, it is *not* the self as an individualised awareness that was present and being remembered as present. Instead, the self that is present at *all* events and which is being recalled is the self as awareness *per se*. Of course, the 'I' can step in and claim memory of the event, and sometimes legitimately so, for self as an individual awareness is being recalled in a memory, but this is often not the case.

It might be said that memories can be self-validating, and therefore, there is no need of an unchanged awareness to validate memories as memories. But what does it mean for a memory to be self-validating? It would mean that memories, in so far as they are memories, can be self-validating that they are representations of former

events which actually occurred. (They would not be memories if the events did not actually occur.) Now, when one recalls a memory, one does not simply recollect and validate a past event or experience but, in addition, one recalls that oneself, the same awareness, was present at the past event. *If* memories are self-validating that they are representations of former events which actually occurred, then one part of these representations which are validated as memories, is that the same or unchanged self doing the remembering was also present at the past events.

Let us consider another argument for the non-spatial nature of the Awareness which we are. In chapter six of tractate IV.7, *On the Immortality of the Soul*, Plotinus gives the following argument for the soul being non-spatial in nature. (Plotinus applies the argument to the rational soul, or what we may call the Higher Self, but it is equally applicable to the normal conscious mind.) He argues that the discernment of the different parts of a given spatial perception, for example, the different parts of a face such as the eyes, nose and ears, requires a non-extended or partless or undivided—we could say, non-spatial—perceiver. This argument may be expressed as follows. One, we perceive the different parts of a given spatial perception, such as a face, together as a whole. Two, if each different part of this perception was apprehended by a *different* perceiver this would mean that the parts would not be perceived as one, whole perception, the face. Instead, each perceiver would be aware of its own part only, and not the other parts. For example, one perceiver would see the nose, the other the eyes, another the ears and so forth, and there would be no perception and apprehension of the face as a whole (which occurs). On the same basis, the different parts of a spatial perception could not be perceived by different parts of the *one* or the *same* perceiver. For example, regarding the perception of a face, one part of the same perceiver would see the nose, another part of the same perceiver would see the ears, another the eyes and so on, and there would be no perception and apprehension of the face as a whole (which of course occurs). Restated, if the perceiver was partite, that is, extended or spatial, where each part of the perceiver perceived a different part of a given perception such as a face, the perception would not be perceived as a united whole. Therefore three, the perceiver must be partless, non-extended or spaceless. In this way, the parts of a given spatial perception can be brought together and united as a whole. If it was objected that the whole spatial perceiver perceived the whole face, we would have to ask, ‘Does each part of that whole perceiver only perceive part of the face?’ If so, we are back to square one—the difficulty outlined above. If the reply is that ‘Each part of whole spatial perceiver sees the whole face’, then we have reached the conclusion that the perceiver sees a *number* of separate faces, namely, a whole face for each part. This is not our perception for we see or perceive only *one* face. Thus, the faces would need to be brought together. If they were brought together in a spatial part of the perceiver, we could ask, ‘Does part of that spatial part (of the perceiver) see a part of the face or the whole face?’ Here, we are back where we started: one part of that spatial part (of the perceiver) cannot perceive only part of the face and the other part of that part the rest, for here the face would not be seen as a whole (which is the case); and if the part of the part perceives the whole face, then so too the other part(s). Again we would have the perception of two or more faces—one by each part. But we see just one face. Thus, these faces would need to be brought together into one part of the perceiver, and

here the problems would start again. So, *ultimately*, the apprehension of a spatial figure needs a non-partite or non-spatial perceiver or Awareness.

Let us consider another argument for the unchanging nature of Awareness. How do we perceive change? We perceive change in a relative manner—by comparing what is changing to what is static or unchanging. For example, imagine that against a black background we see a series of changing colours, say, white, violet, purple and blue. How do we know that the colours have changed? We relate them to the black background which is perceived in such a way that it is believed not to have changed. The colours have changed in relation to the black background which has, apparently, remained the same. However, let us imagine a slightly differing scenario, one which can be replicated with the senses if we wish. Imagine this time that the black is *wholly* replaced within our awareness by the colour white, which in turn is *wholly* replaced with violet, and in turn, purple, blue and so on. Now, again, there is the apprehension of a changing series of colours, but where is our static or non-changing reference by which we have ascertained that one colour has changed to the next? It is simply not present in awareness, for all that was experienced was the series of colours where each *wholly* replaced the other—there is, to repeat, no unchanging reference here. Yet, the apprehension of the changes of mental “objects” or contents within the mind *requires* an unchanging reference or standard. What is this? There is no unchanging entity which is perceived and present—but only the changing colours—therefore, it must be the unperceived awareness itself, and which perceives the changing colours, which is unchanging or changeless or static or always the same. This will also mean that it is timeless, for time is only change or succession. Thus if an awareness is changeless, without succession, it will be a timeless awareness. So, we are saying that the awareness which we are has an apprehension of its own unchanging or timeless nature and, against this reference or standard it can judge that the colours it perceives are changing or temporal. Restated, against the unchanging Awareness that I am, I discern change to occur.

In part, our normal concept of time is of a series of moments or events, each of which has duration or temporal extension. However, each present moment has no duration or what might be called extension or dimension, for if it did, it could be divided into present *and* past, and therefore, it would *not* be the *present* moment. Therefore, each moment is a dimensionless or eternal now. Each of our experiences succeeds the other in awareness and, in the imagination, we can arrange our different experiences into an extended series. But what is the actual nature of this succession which we call time? We can imagine these different experiences as spatial and, in arranging them one after the other, produce a spatial extension or continuum but, of course, this is exactly that, a *spatial* continuum or extension and not a temporal one. In fact, even though our experiences follow in succession, because each one occurred in the present moment which has *no dimension*, then there can be no extension or continuum or duration that is called time; for each of the experiences in the present had no such extension or dimension or duration, and to add together one extensionless or durationless or dimensionless experience to others will give the sum of nothing; zero plus zero is zero. There is just the dimensionless present moment or eternal now, and no continuum before it. Thus, it

seems that while we can experience different experiences in succession, all these experiences, in reality, existed or exist in the same dimensionless moment or present or now.

We are awareness, for if it did not exist neither would we. This awareness at any given present moment has no duration. For if the present moment of awareness had any duration then the latter part of it would, by definition, be awareness existing in the past. But, present awareness is not past awareness. Also, if the present awareness had any duration, part of it would be devoted to the present, and the latter part, the past, simultaneously aware of the past. But we are not aware of the present and past together (simultaneously). Thus, the present awareness which we are has no duration. This means that any and all experiences entering it also can have no duration. So, what is time? A succession of experiences of non-duration occurring with the awareness that we are which also has no duration.

The Awareness that you are is unchanging or timeless or eternal. But within that Awareness time, as change or succession, occurs. Changing experiences in Eternal Awareness, this is the fundamental nature of our existence.

The measurement of time is relative. Essentially, what we are doing is comparing or relating one set of changes, say the experiences of a particular activity, to another set of changes, usually uniform in nature, say those of a clock face.

Causation may be defined as the existence of “something” being produced by and from its prior, or having its nature more or less determined by its prior. Matter, as some sort of spatial substance which is other than awareness, could never cause awareness and the experiences of awareness: something, awareness, cannot come from that which is *other*, matter; that which is greater, awareness, cannot come from that which is lesser, matter; that which is non-spatial, awareness and most of its experiences, cannot come from or be composed of that which is spatial in nature; and the interaction of spatial particles will only ever result in their modification, but never awareness. Neither is any experience in awareness caused by its prior experience. Generally, an experience shares nothing in common with the one which preceded it—they are totally other. As such, an experience could not have been produced by its prior, for something cannot come from that which is other. Next, causation requires one thing acting on another to produce an effect. However, most experiences in awareness are without parts, and therefore, there are no parts to act on each other to produce the next experience. Even when we apparently witness one thing acting on another, we are *actually* witnessing one experience *succeeding another* in awareness, nothing more. Perhaps the easiest way to understand the fallacy of causation is through the dream analogy. In a dream we believe that one thing is causing another, yet there is *only ever* one experience *succeeding* another—so too when we are awake. Instead, our experiences are manifestations out of the Awareness that we are. Some experiences arise in Awareness through the law of attraction, where each experience has the tendency to attract similar experiences. Some arise through conditioning, where experiences normally associated in the past have a tendency to continue to do so—a form of attraction. Some experiences arise from where we choose to place our

attention: when we focus on an experience there is the tendency to attract similar and associated experiences. And others arise from the workings of the Higher Soul or Higher Self, which can produce experiences in our Awareness.

There is a pattern of mental experiences, that is, one type of mental experience always and immediately following upon another type. We “explain” this pattern through causation. What is causation? That one experience gives rise to the next, and does so necessarily. Why is it necessary, why must one experience follow the next? The concept of causation does not, in fact, explain the necessity or mustness of why one experience follows the next. Something, causation, is posited to explain the necessity or mustness, but is itself only a word, a concept or denotation without an actual referent. Of course, it would be circular to point back to the experiences themselves, where one always and immediately follows the other, to provide “evidence” for causation. The concept of causation is meant to explain the pattern, the pattern is not meant to explain the concept of causation.

We have sense experiences, and more generally, experiences, which come and go, and which are related in various ways. We use concepts such as ‘cause’ and ‘effect’, ‘force’, ‘matter’ and ‘energy’ in an attempt to understand and explain these experiences, but these are merely our introduced concepts, and not, on the one hand, independent entities, nor on the other hand, actual explanations.

Subatomic physics shows that there is no causation at that level, but only *probabilities* for subatomic events to occur. We do not have the situation where one event necessarily determines the next, we only have one event *probably* followed by another—it may or may not occur, or another event or events may occur instead. However, these probabilities or tendencies do give rise to consistent *groups* or patterns of subatomic events and relations (characterised by statistical laws). And it is these consistent groups or patterns of events which we ultimately perceive through the senses as so-called physical objects with enduring existence engaged in *apparently* casual or determined relationships.

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15. Spiritual Inquiry

We may discern six major and to some degree overlapping approaches to psycho-spiritual work, which can be used individually or together: 1) mindfulness practice, where there is an emphasis on witnessing and surrendering to our experiences, thereby providing the increased awareness, clarity and calmness required to evoke and receive the Soul’s guidance and grace 2) philosophical, psychological and practical inquiry to ascertain the rational, intuitive, and experiential truth of one’s experiences 3) integrity, where we recognise and give expression to the Soul’s voice 4) the art of deliberate creation, where we consciously and wisely use the law of attraction to shape and create our experiences 5) meditation, to help rend the

veils of delusion and illusion covering reality 6) and prayer, to invoke the grace of the Divine. These practices cover the passive and active aspects of our nature.

What is the essential problem and solution? As we have developed from infants we have attached to some of our experiences and shunned others—lacking wisdom, this is part of our natural response to life. Because of our attachments we have lost the awareness of our Spiritual nature as the Soul and Its Qualities. Simultaneously, from our remaining experiences we have built, in the mind and imagination and for the most part unconsciously, a largely fictitious “reality”. Lacking wisdom, this too is a natural process. Believing this to be reality, we naturally cling or attach to it, and in doing so further shut out the Soul. Divorced from our Spiritual nature we naturally feel impoverished, empty and in need. As we move through life some of our outer experiences evoke inner experiences of the Soul and Its Qualities such as love, joy, peace, power, value, beauty, truth and reality. Misunderstanding the situation, we cling or attach to both these precious inner experiences and also to the outer experiences which evoke them. But when our attachments are broken or threatened—a common occurrence—we suffer. Essentially, this situation, the normal experience of life, has developed because we have lacked and continue to lack wisdom or true understanding. Our essential work then is to deepen in wisdom. Only through wisdom can we dissolve our delusions, illusions and attachments to allow the increasing realisation and expression of our Spiritual nature. Integral to this deepening of wisdom is *inquiry* into the truth of our experiences.

Some of the fundamentals of the Spiritual path are as follows. We must be able to clearly see that we are not the ego, which is but a self-image built up from and encompassing a selection of our experiences. Instead, we must clearly see that we are the Soul or pure Awareness which is, or is the source of, all that is deeply needed: truth, reality, life, self-value, love, joy, goodness, beauty, power and peace—the essence of our well-being. We must clearly see that the ego is not the Soul or Its Qualities. We must clearly see that we blindly and vainly attempt to find the Soul and Its Qualities in external things, including the ego, and in doing so create attachments which, in turn, cause us ongoing pain and suffering. We must clearly see that these attachments not only cause us to suffer, but also, block out or obscure our awareness of the Soul and Its Qualities. We must clearly see where our particular attachments lie, how they are defended, and how to surrender them. And, more positively, we must clearly see what it means to be and to give expression to the Soul and Its Qualities. In part, this clear insight can only come through philosophical, psychological and practical inquiry into our unique experiences.

Spiritual inquiry can and will at times take a predominantly philosophical form where we use rational inquiry to ascertain general and theoretical truths about the nature of our lives. However, Spiritual realisation requires that we also live according to the truths we have found. And so each person must examine the unique circumstances of his or her life to discern whether he or she is living in accord with the truth and, if not, to discern what is needed to do so. This will mean that a Spiritual student must closely look into his or her inner psychological and

outer worldly experiences. Thus, the Spiritual path naturally involves philosophical, psychological and practical inquiry.

Our metaphysical misunderstandings about reality express themselves as psychological problems which, in turn, express themselves through poor self-expression. Conversely, poor self-expression reinforces or exacerbates psychological problems which in turn reinforce metaphysical misunderstandings. The philosophical, psychological and practical are intimately related. They must receive attention both individually and as a whole.

Self-Realisation, as the deepening realisation and expression of one's Soul, is a philosophical, psychological and pragmatic work.

One must understand the truths of life, and also, one must understand how to apply them to the individual circumstance of one's life—reflection and action.

There is the *general and theoretical* work of clearly seeing that we are not the ego, and the ways in which we misidentify with and attach to the ego, thereby forgetting, ignoring or refusing to see our True Nature. And then, there is the *particular and practical* work of applying these findings to the unique circumstances of one's life.

We must discern how truth and delusion and reality and illusion play through *our unique* experiences—through our thinking, feeling, values, motivations, sense perceptions, imaginings and memories. For this inquiry is needed.

He will need to become a Spiritual psychotherapist: he cannot avoid the needed work upon his psychological problems as they relate to and form part of his Spiritual development.

Essentially, Spiritual inquiry is to inquire into the truth and reality of one's experiences, including oneself.

Some of the most essential qualities of Spiritual inquiry include: calmness, stillness, surrender, appreciation, love, joy, clarity, precision, perseverance, will, trust, courage, strength, honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, openness, and rational and logical capacity.

It is the Soul which should guide *Spiritual* inquiry.

Inquiry into the truth requires that we work in relationship with our Higher Soul and Higher Self. Through Their assistance we are given the essential questions which inspire and guide our inquiry; we are given the attributes required to successfully conduct the inquiry such as wisdom, love, non-attachment, strength, joy and integrity; and finally, the answers, as spontaneous insights or revelations, to "our" questions also come from the Higher Soul and Higher Self.

Spiritual inquiry generally begins with a heartfelt question: a question which resonates within us as essential and which is essential that it is answered.

The mind throws up many questions but not all are sacred, from the Soul.

The Higher Soul both asks, and answers, the most important questions, the sacred questions, but in between we must do what is required.

Outwardly, Life presents us with experiences, and inwardly, the Soul asks us questions about it—essential, sacred questions. We give ourselves to these questions, and in doing so develop our powers and abilities. This is one way in which our growth is nurtured.

A *sacred* question is one which is asked by your Soul; it comes into awareness but is given by and received from the Soul. The question works at the edge of your knowing; it is there to extend your development; and so initially its answer will be elusive. While reason may be employed to find an answer, it is not necessarily needed. The essential thing is to keep the question in mind, affirm its importance and be lovingly committed to ascertaining the answer—the truth. This commitment to truth will eventually evoke the answer, also, ultimately, from the Soul.

The question is posed with sincere and ardent aspiration (or love) for an answer. From time to time it is brought back into the mind from the heart where it resides. In its *own* time, the answer will appear.

In the quiet and stillness of contemplation, the Soul's questions and answers can find a way to the surface.

After a break, some time away when she has been concerned with other matters, she returns to the subject and its questions to find that the previously elusive answers now come readily. Who or what did the work when she wasn't working?

When the question and asking are heartfelt, and when there is real openness to the truth, whatever its form, then true answers will come.

Holding a sacred question or a sacred truth in awareness puts the psyche under "pressure", and eventually answers, insights, and other associated ideas appear.

As we *ardently* question, think about, imagine, or in some other way reflect upon something truly important, because it is a Soulful preoccupation, associated and encouraging ideas, inspirations and experiences begin to appear from within and from without.

Inquiry into our experiences requires: that we are more fully and clearly aware of our experiences; that our intent is *only* for the truth of our experiences; that we appreciate the process of inquiry itself; that we follow-up any lines of inquiry which *ask* to be followed; that we inquire in a surrendered or non-attached way;

that we trust that the answers will come; and, that we are open to hearing and to following the truth.

If we have a goal *other* than truth, then in so far as the pursuit or revelation of truth is seen to conflict with that goal we shall forgo the truth.

It is not quite correct to say that truth is the goal of Spiritual inquiry. It is more correct to say that Spiritual inquiry into the truth is intrinsically valuable, and so, done for its own sake—such is the nature of any inspired or Soulful activity. But, such inquiry naturally leads us to the truth.

Why not investigate or inquire into a problem joyfully, search for a solution, an answer, the truth, joyfully, where the looking itself is its own satisfaction? Isn't this likely to be more successful? Isn't this the way the Soul or Spirit—not the ego—inquires?

The search for truth cannot be taken too seriously, for this is just the ego attempting to prove something and in doing so, to get hold of something to support itself—no, a profound lightness must imbue the journey of truth.

Non-serious seriousness is the way.

Be ardent for the truth but surrendered or non-attached at the same time. How? Enjoy the love for truth itself, enjoy the search for truth itself, and enjoy the attainment of truth for itself.

Normally, we more or less restrict our experiences or field of awareness, and distort and misinterpret our remaining experiences by imposing, more or less unconsciously, various delusions and illusions onto them. This is natural to the life of identification with the ego which is always in the process of defending and enlarging itself by limiting and distorting its experiences. To inquire into the truth of our experiences requires that we progressively open to them, for we cannot know the truth of that of which are not aware. Of itself, this opening up will begin to challenge our delusions and illusions, for in part they are based on limiting our awareness to what we want to experience.

Simply bringing greater openness, clarity, non-attachment, acceptance and appreciation to our experiences will *spontaneously* generate new insights about them, including ways to relate to and respond to them constructively—in part this is the justification for mindfulness practice.

The more openness and clarity we bring to our experiences, the greater and more accurate the data with which both reason and logic have to work.

The use of reason and logic can occur as part of inquiry, but if they are to be most effective they must be grounded in the expanding range of our actual experiences, and also, they must be guided and informed by the Soul and the Higher Self which are the sources of truth.

As we mature, it is not only that we have new and greater depths of experiences, but we are also increasingly aware of the details and subtleties of our experiences.

The more openness, attentiveness and sensitivity we can bring to our experiences the more we can learn from them.

With each of our experiences we choose or automatically react to either shut down or remain open.

The more we consciously or unconsciously limit our experiences, the more we limit the opportunities for the wisdom which grows out of our experiences, and vice versa.

It is strange that we push experiences out of awareness believing that this is an *effective* way to deal with them, when it should be clear that when something exists within us, but we are unaware of it, we are at its mercy, for better or for worse.

It's difficult or impossible to see what *actually* is when most of the time we only want to see *certain* things.

One of the greatest reasons that we don't understand the content or workings of the mind, is that we simply don't observe it closely or consistently—in fact, we spend much of our time running from some places within it trying to get to other places.

Identified with the ego, we cannot meet life, our experiences, openly. For if we let our experiences in and see what is *actually* there, this will damage and eventually destroy *identification* with the ego. And so, on the one hand, we select some experiences, those agreeable to the ego, and edit out others, while on the other hand, we meet the remaining experiences with various delusions and illusions which distort them in ways which protect and enhance our ego.

“Inquiry” into the “truth” of our experience often proceeds by taking a limited fragment of it, a fragment acceptable to the ego, and then interpreting it and “reasoning” about it through a filter of unconscious and false preconceptions, and doing so with a view to affirming a goal which is in accord with our unconscious prejudices!

If we are to learn the truth of our experiences, it is axiomatic that we will first need to be open to, aware of, and in touch with those experiences, rather, than defensively or greedily restricting ourselves to a small circle of experiences and, superimposing our delusions and illusions upon them.

Seeing only what we wish to see, adding, with the imagination, what we want to see, twisting, with the mind, often unconsciously, what we are seeing—often, our “seeing” is more accurately called blindness.

The five essential ways we shut out or exclude experiences are: running away from experiences; defending against experiences; attacking experiences; being preoccupied with certain experiences at the expense of others; and hanging onto some experiences to stop others coming in.

Much of the time, most of us are trying to control, suppress and direct our emotions rather than being open to them, experiencing their nature, valuing them for what they are, and discerning what they have to say.

Because we are more or less closed to our experiences we more or less lack intimacy with ourselves and with others.

Normally, we are defended against some aspects of our experience. To accept all that is, a universal 'yes', is to drop one's defences against life. This only comes gradually.

We open by degrees. We can't do it any other way. Partly, this is because we can only handle so much at a time—with each opening there are challenges and there is work to be done. But also, we open in degrees because this process is only partly in our control: it is also a spontaneous process where we are progressively guided, encouraged and assisted by the Soul.

What a revelation to realise that we *need* to become increasingly open to, and aware of, whatever occurs in consciousness, and, to be interested in knowing its nature—instead of closing down or distorting what is there through habits such as repression, avoidance, rationalisation, judging, criticising, minimising and misinterpreting.

At some point along the journey the need to commit to increasing openness becomes obvious.

The Soul has an ongoing commitment to increasing openness. Much of the time It is more or less restricted by the ego, but overall, the movement toward *complete* openness is irrepressible.

Alongside the Soul's ongoing commitment to openness, we must put the ego's ongoing commitment to a degree of closure to protect and enhance itself.

Our Spiritual progress or lack thereof turns largely on how open we can be.

The attitude of openness is not natural for most of us at first—we have to remain more or less consciously committed to it for some time.

“Just” to be open, and to remain open, to life in all its forms, beautiful and frightening, familiar and mysterious, takes tremendous wisdom, dedication and courage.

As we open to and become more sensitive to life, we need greater wisdom, love and strength to relate positively and constructively to our deeper and more varied experiences. Fortunately, these and other Divine attributes are among the experiences which come through increased openness.

When we shut out our “bad” experiences, the same mechanism—rejecting this and attaching to that—also shuts out our good experiences from the Soul. When we open up, the “bad” stuff comes in, but so too the grace from the Soul with which to accept, understand, dissolve or transform our “bad” experiences.

Praying for guidance and grace, and being *open* to what is within and without, optimally, go together.

To be open is to value what Life is offering to us.

As we open to Life, Life opens to us.

Mindfulness meditation is not the attempt to get to anywhere or to attain anything, nor to manipulate or control the content of awareness in any way; instead, it is the act of deliberate attention to more fully and clearly experience what *is* present. In this way, insight, transformation, and growth will occur spontaneously or naturally.

In mindfulness practice we are responsible for the quality of our attention, but not for the insights and transformations which will occur through that attention—that’s God’s responsibility we might say.

Part of mindfulness is to approach each moment with total openness without restricting it, or distorting it, because of presumptions about what it is, or how it should be.

There is experiencing *per se*, and then there is experiencing *and* being aware, or knowing, that one is experiencing. Mindfulness is to mentally step back and witness your experiences and, to be aware or to know that you are doing so. Further, mindfulness is the *bare* or *simple* witnessing of experiences. This is to say that there is no attempt to interfere with or manipulate your experiences in *any* way. There is no *deliberate* rejection of some experiences and movement toward others—there is simply non-directed awareness—and also, there is no *deliberate* thinking about your experiences, including judgements or evaluations. Of course, due to past habits and conditioning, rejection of and movement toward experiences, and thinking about experiences, will automatically or spontaneously occur. But again, these conditioned and automatic reactions are simply witnessed. For various reasons mindfulness plays an integral part in many Spiritual traditions and teachings. First, it is axiomatic that if we wish to know the truth of our experiences we need to be increasingly aware of them, and to do so with increasing clarity. Indeed, as this occurs insights about the nature and meaning of our experiences tend to arise *spontaneously*. Mindfulness facilitates this process, for it is an attitude of openness to *whatever* experiences arise, and a close attention to those experiences. Next, as the bare witnessing of our experiences, mindfulness is a non-

attached way of being. As we release our attachments and aversions repressed experiences emerge into awareness. Having been brought out into the light, we now have the possibility of constructively engaging with these experiences. As we release our attachments we also allow deeper experiences of the Soul and Its Qualities, including truth and wisdom, to emerge. Mindfulness also tends to dissolve negativity and create calmness. Negative emotions are grounded in negative thoughts. If we are not mindful we may automatically allow and affirm our negative thinking, and deliberately engage in it. This fuels or “feeds” our negative emotions. When we are mindful we simply witness our negative thoughts. Consequently, both they and the negative emotions they fuel tend to die down, leaving awareness calm and spacious. In this way mindfulness gives us power over negativity. While valuable in itself, this calm and uncluttered condition is also conducive to the arising of insights and deeper Spiritual experiences—including how to resolve our negativity. More generally, by increasing our awareness of what we are experiencing, mindfulness enables us to more consciously choose our experiences. Again, this is a position of power. Mindfulness is powerful in yet another way. It is easy to be caught up in and swept along by our experiences. But when we are mindful we have deliberately and mentally stepped back and out of this sometimes raging stream. No longer are we being helplessly swept along by our experiences but we are simply witnessing them. Eventually they will begin to slow and settle. This too is a position of power. Finally, mindfulness attenuates our identity with the ego or personality. No longer are we identifying with the ego. Instead, we are regarding it, indeed all of our experiences, as the object of our attention. And who are we? We are the witnessing Awareness. To be mindful is to cease your misidentification with the ego and to more or less consciously “resume” your stance as Awareness Itself. This stance is central to Spiritual practice, development and living.

The ego has an investment in limiting its experiences to what supports it, and in viewing these limited experiences in distorted ways which support it. Mindfulness, the deliberate and non-interfering attention to what is, dispenses with these limitations and distortions of experiences. In doing so, mindfulness challenges and breaks down the delusions, illusions and defences of the ego. For this reason alone, the ego does not like the continued practice of true mindfulness.

Mindfulness is an inherently powerful way of establishing and maintaining one’s inner poise or equilibrium or balance. We may fear being overwhelmed by our emotions. However, if we can learn to mentally step back and simply witness what we are experiencing, not only are we in a position of safety and control, but also, our emotions naturally begin to tranquilise themselves, and insights about our experiences, including the best ways to relate to them, begin to emerge.

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16. Intuition

An intuition is a *spontaneous* insight into the nature of one's experiences. It is spontaneous, and not deliberately created, because it is *given* by the Higher Soul or Its delegate, the Higher Self.

Being from the Higher Soul or Higher Self, intuitions are truths into the nature of reality.

True intuitions, those received from the Soul, are self-validating, that is they carry with them an intrinsic conviction—although this may be somewhat clouded over or obscured by our delusions. If they are true intuitions, this conviction will only strengthen over time.

Intuition operates through the head and the heart: there is an insight, but there is also feeling or emotion associated with that insight.

An intuition is a spontaneous insight coupled with a feeling of conviction, but also, with feelings of love and joy for what has been revealed.

An intuition comes with an experience of emotional and physical power, expansiveness, aliveness and lightness which, just a moment before, was lacking.

The recognition of the truth brings a feeling of lightness to the mind, to the heart, and to the body.

Greater inner aliveness accompanies and is the result of deepening truth.

The truth vitalises, energises.

Our emotional and physical responses and reactions to the truth may be mixed, because there are parts of ourselves which welcome and resonate to the truth, and parts which oppose and conflict with the truth.

The truth is good and can be trusted. If the truth is found to be bad, then either it is *not* the truth, or you do not yet have the *whole* truth.

The truth, which is one's salvation, may be first encountered as terrifying.

Hearing a truth may be hard initially, but will always lead to you feeling better...eventually.

Nothing of real value is lost upon this path of truth—we only lose our delusions and illusions and the experiences associated with them. Instead, everything of real value is revealed and gained upon this path—essentially, the increasing revelation of the Soul and Its increasing expression through the forms of life.

As we open to the truth it can be disruptive and painful, but if we can take the truth deep enough, and absorb it fully enough, the pain will dissolve leaving happiness and peace.

The path of truth is one of constant disruption leading to greater and greater peace.

Hearing the truth may be hard, but not as hard as trying to live a lie.

There is no deep and lasting peace in delusion.

Only deep truths bring deep peace.

The head and heart are really the two ways that the Soul communicates (to us) or embraces (through us) the truth.

When we grasp the truth through the heart, we do so with a combined feeling and experience of rightness, joy, love, peace and even beauty.

Intuition may also operate as a resonance within the heart to what is heard or read—this is the Soul's inner response showing us that what has been heard or read is true.

The truth of a teaching must be met with a resonance from the heart of the person who receives it, if it is to be effective.

A central reason why most Spiritual teachings are found to be relatively ineffective is that they have not been understood or have been misunderstood—not just in the evident way where people appraise them but regard them to be wrong, but in the more subtle way, in that the teachings fail to touch the heart. The would-be student may even give intellectual and verbal assent to the teachings—for example, agreement that one is not the ego—but the heart remains essentially untouched, for the old delusions and illusions prevail. Life must prepare the student further.

Can reason unequivocally affirm the law of karma, or that all suffering eventually yields happiness? There are some places where, at least initially, only the heart can go, where only the heart can see.

Along the path of truth, the heart is often way out in front, and the head is struggling to catch-up.

If one is too enamoured with reason, then the truths of the Heart, offered through intuition and refined feeling, or the truths offered through direct experience, will be disregarded. Only a third of the human being is functioning.

If truths are put in story form they may be more fully accepted. Stories, making no claim to facts or truth, are not so quickly censured and rejected by the intellect because of their failure to meet certain criteria for truth. With the intellect relaxed, the truths in the stories can be met and accepted by the heart, which has its own way of knowing the truth through feeling.

The rational and logical mind may scoff at, or run away from, what is rendered in symbols such as myths, parables, dreams and allegories, for they are in a different language, the metaphorical rather than the literal, and principally for a different mode of apprehension, the heart rather than the head.

Both myths and stories can by-pass the intellect and touch the heart, provided of course that the intellect does not reject them outright because engagement with them is beneath its dignity.

In mythology, the Fool is the idiot or naive person who is unconsciously wise. He (or she) is used by the Divine to express wisdom because his lack of intellectual development and pride do not interfere with the expression. But his lack of development also means that his revelations may be somewhat cryptic, uncultured, unrefined and out-of-the-ordinary.

Reason may be defined as the power of thinking which gives us the conceptual truth of experience. But, at the heart of reason, the essence of its knowing, is intuition, which is the reception of spontaneous insights regarding experience from the depth of Oneself, from the Soul.

The heart of reasoning is intuition, the spontaneous reception of truths, but arriving in the context of our deliberate, deep and conceptual thinking about the nature of things.

An intuitive truth might follow a line of deliberate thought and complete that line of thought, but it, itself, is not something which is deliberately derived from that line of thought.

The intuition is not a truth that was implicit in the prior thoughts (or premises) and deliberately extracted, rather, it is a new idea that arrives spontaneously, of its own accord, when we are more or less passive.

The nature of the reception of an intuitive or rational truth testifies to the independence of that truth from our own making: the truth comes spontaneously, not from our deliberate effort; it is seen not to be a logical extension or extrapolation from the prior line of thoughts; and it comes with an element of surprise expressed as ‘Aha!’

The best thoughts are spontaneous, given, received.

Intuition (sometimes called faith) and reason can work, and indeed are meant to work, together. Reason requires the guidance of intuition, indeed, at its highest, *is* intuition; whereas intuition needs the check of reason to separate and purify it from stupid and ignorant opinion.

Normally, we don’t deliberately think our thoughts—if we watch closely, we find that they arrive *on their own*. When they do arrive, and if we are aware of being aware of them, *then* we have the choice to focus or not focus upon them—an act of

deliberate thinking—and in doing so to attract or induce—not cause in the classical sense—similar and associated thoughts, the precise nature and timing of which is not, or not fully, within our control.

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17. Reason

Reason is the faculty or power of deliberate thinking which generates *new* conceptual truths regarding the nature of our experiences, their being and laws.

The metaphysics of the truth is the *conceptual* truth of the nature of our experiences and what lies beyond those experiences, where these conclusions are the outcome of rational thinking based on that experience. The metaphysics of the truth has two major limitations which are inherent to the nature of reason. First, there is a limit to the *number* of truths that reason, based on limited experiences, can generate. Second, reason cannot give us truth as the knowing of experiences or reality *itself*, but only ever thoughts or concepts *about* reality. The knowing of reality itself can only come through *being* it—knowing-by-being.

Reason can only give us truths of a certain kind or nature: reason gives us the truth in concepts or thoughts *about* or *describing* the nature of experience, but it does not give us the truth which comes from *having* the experience *itself*—much the same as the thought or concept of honey is not the knowing which comes from the direct experience or taste of honey. The knowing of the actual nature of an experience can only come when the conceptual layer or interposition has been removed, and one knows the experience directly by *being* it—knowing-by-being. However, in so far as reason can conceptually know experience or reality—its being and laws—where this conceptual knowing is absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete, then reason can be said to generate truth. Reason can be said to give us *conceptual* truths *about* or *describing* our experience but not the truth as the knowing of the actual nature of this experience by being it. Of course, if truth is defined as the actual knowing of experience or reality, then reason cannot give us the truth.

If the Real or Divine is not a thought, then reason, using thought, cannot grasp, or be, the Real.

If the Real is non-changing It cannot be a thought which comes and goes in awareness.

Reason, as thought, is not the Real, at best, it can give us a description of or about the Real.

Reason points to Awareness as That which is spaceless or infinite and timeless or eternal. In doing so, reason points to That which is beyond our imagination which works in spatial and temporal forms. Further, in doing so, reason points to That which is beyond itself, for as thoughts, reason is temporal, and in so far as it uses images reason is also spatial. ‘The metaphysical work of reason is to prove to us intellectually that something exists which reason itself cannot grasp because of its super-intellectual character.’—PB.

We can describe the Soul or the Divine in negatives, what It is not, including being spaceless and timeless, and, we can describe It in positives, but with the understanding that these positives, being limited or finite in character because drawn from our ordinary and finite experiences, are not the Soul or the Divine Itself which is not finite. Our positive descriptions of the Soul or Divine are only pointers to Its nature, pointers which attempt to evoke or educe in us some *direct* experience of It, an experience which will *transcend* the pointers or positive descriptions which are limited or finite in nature.

Living in accord with the correct conceptual understanding or truth of reality prepares us, and opens the door, for grace to grant us the experience of Reality and Truth—the experience of Being Infinite-Eternal Awareness from which finite forms, including the ego, arise and into which they disappear.

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18. Knowing-By-Being

If you are *separate* from an object or event or experience, then you will need to experience the object or event or experience *indirectly* through a *representation* of it in your awareness, for example, as a sense perception or as a concept. Here, we cannot *fully* know the object or event or experience *itself*, but only know our representation of it. Second, this representation may be a limited or distorted representation of the object or event or experience. Again, there is no full knowing. By only having a representation of the object or event or experience, and possibly, a limited or distorted representation of it, there is no absolutely accurate, certain complete and unchanging knowing of it—in short, there is no truth. These difficulties arise because of the separation between oneself and the object, event or experience. They can only be removed if the separation between oneself and the object, event or experience is abolished. Here, you will *be* the object, event or experience, and therefore, know it in a direct and unmediated manner.

You cannot know reality itself without being it, for if there is a separation between you and reality—or between you and what is—you can only ever grasp and know it as an image or reflection or simulacrum or representation—but to know the representation of reality is not to know reality itself.

We only have two options. We can know existence or reality *indirectly through* a representation of some sort, say an idea (or concept) or image (any imagined thing). But this is only to know our individual, unique and relative representation of existence or reality. Or, alternatively, we can know existence or reality *directly* by being it.

In knowing-by-being one *is* what is known.

In knowing-by-being the act of being and knowing are one and the same.

In knowing-by-being the act of being and the knowing are one and the same, where the knowing is the truth of the being.

In knowing-by-being, being or reality and knowing or truth are one and the same.

In knowing-by-being, truth and reality are one and the same.

In knowing-by-being you know something simply by being it, where this is a direct or unmediated knowing of the being (or reality).

What fulfills the definition of real as that which actually exists, as opposed to our mistaken beliefs and imaginings as to what actually exists? If the inquiry is to have an answer it must come to rest in that which is self-evidently real, for in these matters we cannot have an endless regress of justifications. What fulfills the definition of truth as that knowing which is the absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete knowing of reality or part of it? If the inquiry is to have an answer it must come to rest in that which is self-evidently true, for in these matters we cannot have an endless regress of justifications.

When you know something simply by being it you have the completed, unchanging, certain and accurate knowing of it, that is, you have the truth of it.

We can only know the truth of reality by being it, and not via a representation of it, for this is only to know the representation and not reality itself. Delusions and illusions are our mistaken ideas and imaginings about reality, that is, our mistaken representations of reality—as such they are not reality. As we dispel our delusions and illusions we progressively come to know the truth of our experiences, what is, reality, simply by being it.

Delusions and illusions may be defined as our distorted representations of reality but which we mistake to be reality itself.

In knowing-by-being you know something simply by being it where this knowing is not mixed up with any ideas or imaginings which are mistaken for the actual nature of the being (or reality). This is to say that in knowing-by-being you know something simply by being it where this knowing is not mixed with delusions and illusions regarding the nature of the being (or reality).

Awareness knows its finite experiences by *being* them. This is a direct or unmediated, and spontaneous type of knowing. If awareness cannot *be* its finite experiences, then these experiences lay outside of that awareness, will be other than awareness, and awareness will be ignorant of them. For awareness to know of that which is other and outside of itself, then representations such as ideas or images of the other must be evoked within awareness and, again, *be* awareness.

Being all your experiences, you are *not* other than them, not other than life. This is the truth of Non-Duality.

We *always are* our experiences but we do not know them truly by being them because these experiences are mixed with our delusions and illusions regarding their nature. This is to say, we *always are* what is, reality, but we do not truly know it because we are unconsciously superimposing our delusions and illusions regarding its nature.

We always are what is—dimensionless Awareness in which finite experiences are appearing and dissolving—but we do not know the truth of what is by being it because we are superimposing our delusions and illusions regarding its nature.

What separates us from Being (Awareness)? Nothing: we are It now. It is *only* the *mistaken belief* or delusion and associated illusion that we are a separate entity, the ego, and our attachment to it, which prevents us from fully experiencing our ever-present Being. What then is required for the Realisation of ourselves as Being? Essentially, to drop our belief in being the ego, and in doing so, to also drop our attachment to it. '[L]iberation is actually a change of mind.'—A. H. Almaas. 'One who considers himself free is free indeed, and one who considers himself bound remains bound. "As one thinks, so one becomes." is a popular saying the world, which is too true.'—*Ashtavakra Samhita*.

From the primal source, The Spirit, the Spiritual universe manifests a series of what can alternatively be called planes or levels or dimensions of existence. Essentially, these universal planes are constituted of finite experiences manifesting "within" or appearing to the dimensionless Awareness which is the essence of individual Souls. The manifest universe is objective or absolute in that it can, and will, be experienced *in exactly the same way* by any individual Soul who can be aware of it *without* superimposing any individually or subjectively created ideas and images onto it and *mistaking* these as being part of it. This is to know what is, reality, free of our delusions and illusions. This is to know the truth of reality.

The Archetypes Know the Truth of Themselves, Their Reality, simply by Being Themselves. Likewise, the Higher Soul Knows the Truth of Itself and Its Vision of the Archetypes simply by Being Itself and Its Vision.

How is it that Awareness can know itself simply by being itself? Awareness has the power to know Itself by being itself, because this power of knowing is inherent to Its nature—where Its Being (Awareness) *is* Knowing.

How is it that we, as awareness, can know the truth of our finite (or limited or particular) experiences by being them? We can know the truth of our finite experiences—including their various characteristics or dimensions relative to each other—by simply being them *because this act of knowing is grounded in the Knowing-By-Being of the Higher Soul*. Essentially what occurs is as follows. The formless Awareness or Being which is the Higher Soul *is* Knowing. Thus the Higher Soul knows Itself by Being Itself. The Higher Self also Knows Its Vision of the Archetypes by Being Them. When we know the truth of *our* finite experiences by being them, we are grasping how and to what degree our finite experiences reflect and express the Higher Soul and Its Vision of the Archetypes, where this knowing of ours is grounded in, and is a reflection of, the Knowing of the Higher Soul, both of Itself and Its Vision of the Archetypes. How does this occur exactly? Our grasping of the truth of our finite experiences is possible because the Higher Soul compares our finite experiences to Itself and Its Archetypal Vision to ascertain how and to what extent these finite experiences reflect Itself and the Archetypes—where the Soul Knows Itself and the Archetypes by Being Itself and the Archetypes—and then we *receive* these comparisons as truthful insights regarding the nature of our finite experiences. For example, we know that a finite experience is beautiful or good, or has a particular shape and colour, and so on, because it has been compared by the Higher Soul to Itself and Its Vision of the Archetypes—where the Higher Soul Knows Itself and the Archetypes by Being Itself and the Archetypes—and then, we receive this comparison and knowing from the Higher Soul as an insight, or as truthful insights, about the beauty, goodness, shape, colour, and so on, of the finite experience in question. For the sake of completeness, we must mention that the Higher *Self*—intermediate between the Higher Soul above and us below—*also* undertakes this process of comparison. Here, the Higher Self compares our finite forms or experiences to the Higher Soul and Its Vision to ascertain how and to what extent these finite experiences reflect the Higher Soul and Its Archetypal Vision. Again, we receive these comparisons as truthful insights about our finite experiences.

Three elements are required to truthfully know the nature or character of a finite or manifest form or experience: first, for the awareness that we are *to be* that finite form or experience; second, for us not to impose any delusions or illusions onto that finite form or experience; and third, for us to comprehend or know how and to what degree the finite form or experience reflects the Soul or Archetype(s). This latter step occurs when the Higher Soul compares our finite experiences to Itself and Its Archetypal Vision—where the Soul Knows Itself and Its Archetypal Vision by Being Itself and Its Vision—and then we receive these comparisons as truthful insights into the nature of our finite experiences. We see here that *any* truthful knowing of *any* finite form or manifestation is grounded in, and is a reflection of, the Self-Knowing of the Soul and the Archetypes. This to say, the Self-Knowing of the Soul and the Archetypes enters into *all* of our truthful knowing.

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19. The Deepening of Truth

Once your Heart has resonated to a deep truth, you will never quite be able to let it go; the Heart will never quite stop reminding you.

The great truths are so profound that we initially hear them and “agree” with them but don’t really experience anything of their depths, as evidenced by the fact that our emotions and actions are left largely untouched.

We pass over a deep truth lightly because we do not experience its profundity—we are seeing its surface but missing its depth. We *will need* to look again.

The great truths tend to reveal their profound depths, majestic expanses and awe-inspiring heights gradually.

We can, and will, spend many years sinking down into the profound depths of some truths, and ascending to the sublime heights of others.

A deep truth keeps returning, each time revealing more of its aspects and facets, more of its depth and extent, and more of its importance and value.

Once a new insight or truth has been received, the implications may take a lifetime to explore, unfold and become explicit.

Receiving a deep truth is only the first step: applying it to the unique and unfolding circumstances of one’s life will be ongoing.

We keep circling back to the same, essential truths, but now understood in more depth and detail, and with deeper appreciation and greater conviction.

Again and again we circle back to the same truth, but on a higher level.

We keep reframing or re-contextualising life more and more accurately until we see it perfectly.

Why should we and why do we repeat the same essential truths, in so many ways, drawing out their many implications? One reason is that we spend so much time repeating the same lies, in so many ways, drawing out their many implications.

Over and over again we “wake up” to find that we are re-identified with being the ego—re-identified with a dream figure, and lost in the dream of which it is part.

Increased mindfulness shows that his actions, speech, emotions, desires, imaginings, memories, beliefs and thoughts betray the truth that many times throughout the day he is relapsing back into identity with the ego or self-image, following its voice, and therefore, disregarding Beingness and integrity.

Almost everyone is consistently telling him—overtly or covertly, consciously or unconsciously—that he is the ego; and so he must make an active effort to consistently affirm that he is essentially Divine Awareness.

It's not simply a question of whether we know the truth, but also of whether we need to hear it again—be reminded of it again.

We come to accept the great Spiritual truths only gradually, for they both require and effect a pervasive and profound intellectual, intuitive, emotional and practical reorientation, reorganisation and rejuvenation of our lives, involving the dismantling and destruction of our deeply cherished illusions.

The conceptual shift from identity with the ego to being Divine Awareness is the major shift regarding self-knowledge upon the Spiritual quest. But, the position that one is infinite and eternal Awareness in which all of life unfolds as a series of mental states or phenomena has ontological and, more generally, metaphysical implications which, for most, will constitute a complete subverting of their “reality”. To *fully* grasp what this position means and to *fully* accept it is quite rare.

The ontological, metaphysical, mental, emotional, moral, social, practical and physical implications of the recognition that one is *not in* the world, but the world is within oneself as dimensionless Awareness, are stupendous.

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20. The Living of One's Truth and Reality

Can we realise the truth by living a lie, or realise the real by choosing a dream?

We are not going to get to the truth by living that which is untrue. Knowing and living the truth is, ultimately, the only way of realising the truth.

A full commitment to the truth means ascertaining and *living* the truth.

The search for truth may begin with intuition, reason, logic and, in general, thinking, but it won't end there, because the truth must be fully lived, embodied and experienced.

One of the greatest barriers to any real progress in Spirituality or well-being is that we do not implement, do not actually live, our newly acquired wisdom.

Truth is not to be blamed for the poor results which come from, in fact, choosing falsity over truth.

I have heard, read and repeated the great truths to myself many times, yet the results appear at times paltry. Evidently, I have not fully believed and lived these truths.

To fully experience a truth means that the subconscious opposition to it has been fully dissolved—in part, this requires the *living* of that truth.

Once the truth is grounded in everyday living, you have it—prior to this it is shaky. This is because putting truth into action will evoke any latent, subconscious and remaining defenses (delusions and illusions) contrary to the truth, force you to clear them away, and so, leave the truth unopposed and strong.

Consciously, you may believe that you are not the ego, but your subconscious has a different view about the subject!

Until a truth is fully integrated into one's practical life it has not yet been *fully* learned.

Action activates, reveals and helps to dissolve hitherto unconscious delusions, illusions, attachments and related emotions—hence its necessity.

The more *directly* our identity with and attachment to the ego, and all else which is false, is challenged, the more suffering we may experience, but also, the greater possibility of truth and transformation. A purely intellectual understanding of the truths of life often extends a challenge to the ego, but it is often oblique and at a distance. When we consider how these intellectual truths relate to the individual or particular circumstances of our lives, there is a closer and more direct challenge to the ego. When we *commit* to implementing these truths into our lives, the ego is directly, explicitly and concretely challenged.

A truth is fully understood and affirmed *only* through complete commitment to it.

How far, to what degree, does she believe in her new vision of reality, of what existence actually is? To the degree that she actually lives it.

If you are not living your truth you can forget the idea that it *is your* truth—in fact, you believe in something other.

An intellectual grasp of the truth must be completed through action. 'Action is with the scholar subordinate but it is essential. Without it he is not yet man.'—Emerson.

Theory and application need to be balanced.

We bring our truths up to what we generally believe is the real world, the realm of the five senses, but then we *leave* them at the door. Why is this? We don't really believe in these truths, we don't really believe that they are part of and operate in reality (or what we take to be reality), or believe that they are actually beneficial, as claimed, to our reality. To fully come to believe in our truths we must bring them

through the doorway into what we believe is the real world, the life of the five senses, the realm of action. Bringing them through is often a leap of faith. But, if we don't bring them through they are not true for us, not yet.

How deeply do we trust in Life? How deep is our conviction in the truth? All conclusions regarding these matters which are reached outside of, and independent of, the *lived* experience of the truth are, quite frankly, at best speculative, at worst total rubbish.

A truth is *fully* learned by committing to it in an environment which at times opposes or appears to oppose it, including the company of others who believe or appear to believe otherwise.

How is a truth confirmed? It is crucial that we choose it in preference to its opposite. When is a truth finally confirmed? When we choose it in preference to anything else.

If a truth is only to be finally and completely learned through the commitment to it, then Life will, indeed must, give us a choice between that truth and its opposite—a choice where we will commit to the truth. It follows also that Life will need to wait until such a commitment is forthcoming until one's life can move forward, to the next step.¹³

If there *is* a real commitment to a truth, then the Soul and Life will progressively reveal to you all that oppose and conflict with that truth.

Life has a habit of confronting us with our lies and deceptions.

Many of our attachments, particularly to the ego, lie in the subconscious, and we need the encounter with life to bring them to the surface, into the light, to be dealt with. This cannot be done in a vacuum. As Goethe portrayed in *Faust*, the way out of the world is *through* it, not around it.

He does not live the truth because he does not fully believe it; he does not fully believe the truth because he does not live it. How does one break through this impasse? Sometimes it is due to the inner reception of grace which shifts his conviction to a deeper level, and sometimes it is due to an inner change forced by external circumstances.

Is Life waiting for a real commitment from you, to the truth?

If we do not honour the truth which has been given to us, can we expect to receive further and deeper truths?

¹³ When capitalised, 'Life' means more than merely our finite or limited experiences. 'Life' means our experiences as an expression of the infinite intelligence, love and power possessed by our Souls, other Souls and the Archetypes which are, along with our free choices, the creators of our experiences.

The more we honour truth, the more truth honours us with its presence.

Her life must keep pace with her truth; her life must be a testament to the truth which she has acquired.

As we grow, we feel increasing pressure to heal the separation, the wound, between our Heartfelt aspirations and what we are actually expressing.

We acknowledge and respect the man (or woman) who is living according to his truth, for he actually believes it, and *has* made it his own.

Make truth your home. Let truth be your refuge. Let truth be the ground beneath your feet.

Know the truth, live the truth, experience the truth, express the truth, see the truth, hear the truth, touch the truth, taste the truth, smell the truth, breathe the truth, talk the truth, walk the truth, love the truth, feel the truth, aspire to the truth, intuit the truth, think the truth, imagine the truth, dream the truth, remember the truth, choose the truth, will the truth, harmonise with truth, dance with the truth, obey the truth, dedicate yourself to the truth, honour the truth, praise the truth, be the truth...and only the truth.

By living the truth, we honour its Source.

See the world through the eyes of the Soul, see it in the light of truth and reality, and live accordingly.

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21. Truth, Reality and Integrity

The *true* conscience is the voice of the Higher Soul—or Its deputy, the Higher Self—within us, where this is an expression of Its truth or wisdom. This voice is guiding us to live in that way which enables us to fulfill our destiny or Spiritual-Realisation. To live according to the voice of the Soul is to live with Spiritual integrity.

The guiding voice of the conscience embodies the Soul's knowing of the truth of reality. This is to say, that we are being guided in accord with the truth.

The voice of the Soul guides your life so that it is an expression and affirmation of the truth. This may not be the highest truth or the complete truth, but it is the highest and most complete truth that you are capable of receiving and expressing at this time.

As we *live* according to truth, in particular, as we live with integrity which is to be guided by the truth, we progressively dissolve our delusions and illusions, and our attachments which are grounded in them. As this dissolution occurs we increasingly experience existence as it actually is, which is to experience reality. Ultimately, we come to know reality free of delusions, illusions and attachments. When there is no imposition of delusions and illusions there is simply a knowing of what is, reality, by being it—knowing-by-being. Two of the *fundamental* aspects of the reality we come to know are the Soul, Oneself, as pure Awareness, and the finite forms appearing in that Awareness.

Dedication to the truth means dedication to integrity which is the living of the truth.

True integrity is the embodiment and expression of the wisdom of the Soul.

As dimensionless Awareness, the Soul is the *transcendent* unity of Its many Qualities. When the Soul *expresses* Itself these Qualities manifest as finite experiences “within” the Soul. Whenever a Quality of the Soul finds manifest expression we find that all the other Qualities are in some way present, thereby reflecting and preserving something of the original and transcendent unity of the Qualities in the Soul. This unity is particularly evident in the *first* level of manifestation where the Qualities exist as part of the Higher Soul’s unique Vision of the Archetypes. But this unity is also persevered in *our* expression of the Soul’s Qualities: whenever one Quality is expressed all of the others are implicit and more or less explicit. For example, if we express ourselves truthfully, in particular, with integrity, we see and feel that it is simultaneously an expression of the Qualities or Reality, Value, Goodness, Power, Love, Joy and Peace.

We deepen into the Qualities of the Soul by giving them expression. In this regard, the voice of integrity is our guide. Whenever we express the voice of the Higher Soul and live with true integrity, then all of these Qualities are inherent in that expression; one or more Qualities will be more dominant and evident, but all of the others will be to some degree present and colour that expression.

Truth is inseparable from the other Qualities of the Soul. When truth is present, to the degree that it is present, there is joy, peace, love, beauty, power, value, goodness and reality.

To know to live and to be the truth, is to know to live and to be all that inherently and inseparably belongs to the truth: reality, goodness, well-being, positivity, power, strength, freedom, love, beauty, joy, value and peace.

To live without integrity is to live according to delusion and unreality—the inevitable outcomes are possessiveness, fear, anger, hate, and sadness. To live with integrity is to live according to wisdom and reality—the inevitable outcomes are non-attachment, peace, happiness and love.

The whole Universe supports the development of integrity, which is the expression of truth.

Nothing is more powerful than knowing and living the truth.

Nothing is more powerful than the truth.

Truth is invulnerable.

How then shall we define and recognise the voice of the Soul? It is that voice within which is imbued with the *deepest* sense of rightness. It is that voice within which is associated with a degree of love or appreciation for what is being expressed, for oneself, and for others when they are involved. It is that voice within whose expression gives us the *deepest* sense of peace and happiness. It is that voice within which is humble in that it is not the result of identification with and attachment to a self-image. It is that voice within whose expression, in and of itself, is *inherently* satisfying and therefore non-attached or surrendered. And it is that voice which is *not* the motivations of fear, anger or hate.

There are many possible reasons why we choose *not* to follow the guidance of our Soul or Higher Self, but, the truth is that *none* of them are adequate.

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22. Truth and Non-Attachment

A desire or attachment is a psychological “clinging” or “grasping” onto an experience. When our attachments are threatened or broken we react with anxiety, anger and sadness. The greater our attachments the more intensely felt are these negative emotions. Our attachments to experiences also close off to the deeper experiences of the Soul—the greater our attachments the greater the closure. The release of our attachments then is necessary for our well-being and our Spiritual-Realisation. How shall we accomplish this? A desire or attachment is an expression of a delusion, and so, an attachment can *only* be dissolved by seeing through that delusion to the truth.¹⁴

Our attachments which bind us to our experiences are grounded in our delusions, and they are only truly released through wisdom or truth. As our attachments are released, the negative emotions generated by them are dissolved, and we open to the deeper and intrinsically valuable experiences of the Soul.

An attachment or addiction can be ignored, repressed or rationalized “away”, but until it is *understood*, that is, until the falsity which is driving it is uncovered, and

¹⁴ In this book, the terms ‘desire’ and ‘attachment’ are synonyms.

the truth seen, it will continue to operate, or go “underground” into the unconscious and re-emerge again when conditions are right.

Telling, urging or demanding oneself or another to let go or surrender is basically useless. We will only let go of someone, something or some experience when we *clearly see* that holding onto it is based in delusion, that this delusion and holding on are causing us to suffer unnecessarily and, that there is another, truthful, and actual way to fulfillment.

To a large degree, we do not *deliberately* surrender. Instead, by *clearly* seeing that attachment to someone or something is based on delusion, brings suffering and, at best, brings a shallow and transitory satisfaction while blocking our deeper and lasting fulfillment, we *spontaneously* let go—in the light of this truth how else could we now respond? However, we will still need to choose to follow the new truth which has been revealed for the *completion* of our surrender or non-attachment.

When we *really* see that a way is damaging and useless, we give it up; when we *really* see that a way is good and necessary we take it up.

Life is so designed that when we crave for, or attach to, other than what is, at that moment we suffer—anger, sadness and fear in their various shades occur. And so, Life is continually teaching non-attachment to what is other, and acceptance of what is.

Not until we *really see* that someone, something, *any* particular experience, cannot really fulfil us, and that fulfilment can *only* come through holding it all lightly, do we truly let go and surrender.

Seeing the truth about our attachments, seeing through the delusions upon which they are based, we let them go, or more precisely, *they spontaneously let themselves go*.

The essence of letting go of an attachment, addiction, fixation, compulsion, desire, etc., is to clearly and completely see the delusion(s) at its core and of which the attachment is but a manifestation. When this actually occurs, the attachment will *spontaneously* drop away.

By its very nature, wisdom releases attachments.

To *really see through* an attachment, the suffering it causes, the fulfillment it can never give, and the Divine experiences it obstructs, is “all” that is needed.

No-one has, and ever will, dis-attach him- or herself, for true non-attachment—as opposed to the mere external separation from someone or something—is an inner shift caused by an influx of truth from the Divine—a descent of grace.

No-one has ever voluntarily given up one of the great attachments—such as the attachment to relationships, sex, the body, health, money, or self-image—without the Soul’s help, without at times being forcibly separated from the experience which one wishes to possess, and without the Divine influx of insight or truth about the attachment—a response to one’s seeking for answers—which automatically results in the release of the attachment.

Initially, we naïvely believe that we ourselves can break our major attachments. No: the major ones will be broken by Life, time and again, by removing who or what we are attached to, until we are so exhausted that we must let go to some extent. In the “space” which opens up a new and deeper perspective emerges from the Soul, one which *sees* the benefit of non-attachment. This insight *automatically* releases us further. By being faithful to our insight, by affirming and living it, we release ourselves even more.

Resisting something and attaching to its opposite, and the negative emotions that this generates, come from a deluded perspective. But when we accept or allow what is, neither resisting nor attaching, in the relative peace which ensues, a new and truer perspective will eventually and spontaneously emerge, one which will dissolve the delusions, resistances, attachments and the negative emotions.

If we can *relax* our hold on someone, something, some experience, then eventually, a healthier way to relate to that person, thing or experience will emerge.

Much or most of the time we are not oriented to discerning the truth of our experiences, but occupied with clinging to some of our experiences and rejecting others, based on the illusion that we *already* know the truth, in particular, that our good is to be found in the possession of some experiences and avoidance of others.

Attachments are experienced as a tightness and heaviness in the emotions: anxiety, fear, frustration, anger, sadness and depression. This becomes more evident once they have been released. This is really to say that our delusions—which underlie our attachments—are experienced as a tightness and heaviness in the emotions. There is a corresponding and resulting tightness and heaviness in the body. Again, this will be more evident once these attachments have been released and their underlying delusions dissolved. As our attachments are breaking, which is also the breaking down of our delusions, their physical and emotional tightness and heaviness is fully experienced. But, as we begin to resonate with truth, increased expansion, lightness and vitality is felt throughout the emotions and the body.

Attachments are a deadening influence, and so when they are actually broken we experience a feeling and sensation of lightness and expansion.

Peace is the emotion of non-attachment and acceptance.

A current of truth, aspiration, motivation, power, love, joy and peace is always, to some degree, flowing into us from the Soul and carrying us back to the Soul, while we simultaneously create a life which expresses and reflects the Soul and Its

Qualities. This current stirs up and is opposed by delusions, illusions, attachments and fears which cause us to doubt its goodness and to go with its flow. Truth—intuitive, rational, logical and experiential—is required to dissolve these opposing forces so that we are free to flow with this Divine current.

Essentially, it is *only* our ignorance or delusion that keeps us in bondage, restricted and imprisoned—that prevents our freedom. Ultimately, *only* the truth sets us free.

The whole movement of Life is toward greater truth, and therefore, toward greater non-attachment which is an expression of the truth.

Only the truth is truly liberating. Complete truth is completely liberating.

Truth opens up our experiences, our lives, and us.

It has been said before, that the truth sets you free.

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23. Truth, Reality, Suffering and Healing

Socrates says somewhere that wonder or awe is the beginning of philosophy—or love (*philo*) of the truth (*sophia*)—however, quite a good case could be made out to conclude that pain and suffering are generally the greatest instigators of this study.

For many of us, it is suffering whereby truth becomes important.

The rationale behind inquiring into suffering is straightforward enough: if we can ascertain the cause of the suffering we may be able to remove that cause, and in turn, reduce or remove the suffering. Regarding emotional suffering, and much of our physical suffering, this cause is found to be, ultimately, within ourselves: we have an ignorant or wrong view of our experiences, including ourselves. So, we inquire into our suffering to see where we are lacking wisdom or are mistaken and, to find the truth about our experiences, our lives and ourselves.

The *sincere* search for the truth when we are suffering shows part of the deeper value of suffering.

Let your suffering drive you to the truth.

For a person in pain, an abstract, unrealistic or incomplete philosophy of life is no longer adequate.

To live according to what is false is to eventually incur suffering, for we are viewing life in a distorted and negative way, and, we are living out of accord with what actually is, reality. When we live according to the truth we deepen in well-

being, for we are viewing life in a clear and positive way, and, we are living in accord with what actually is, reality.

The greater a person's delusions, the more unstable he is mentally, emotionally and behaviourally, for his delusions, the foundation of his life, are continually being challenged by the realities of life. Further, the things of the world on which he *depends* for his happiness and fulfilment—where such dependencies are due to his delusions—are, like all things, being continually threatened, damaged or destroyed by life's progress. Whereas, the wiser a man is the more stable he is mentally, emotionally and behaviourally, for life unfolds in accord with his truth, and there are few if any things on which he depends outside of his inherent Nature for happiness and fulfilment.

We take ourselves to be the ego, and we take the ego to be permanent. But the ego is only an impermanent and tenuous self-image built up in the imagination from our *ever-changing* experiences or mental states. Mistaking ourselves to be the ego, and mistaking it for something permanent, on this "foundation", we attempt to establish our well-being!

It is not that emotional suffering is an illusion, as some traditions state or suggest, but that our emotional suffering is ultimately *based* on illusion, that is, on a false way of viewing and experiencing life.

We suffer when we mistake our delusions and illusions for truth and reality, and attempt to live according to them.

It is amusing that most people admit that they do not have the deeper answers to life's questions, but, they still expect that life should unfold in accord with their expectations.

When we believe that life has been denied to us, or that Life has denied us, often, what has really been denied is the fulfillment of our delusions and illusions about the way we believe life should be.

Sometimes, it is only when the pain of existence is sufficiently intense and prolonged that we *seriously* question whether we are living in truth and reality or delusion and illusion.

The more we come to *realise* that we are lost in delusion and illusion, and that not only is this the ultimate cause of our suffering but also of our lack of fulfilment, the more sincerely we dedicate ourselves and our lives to truth and reality.

For whom should we have more compassion, the person whose dream world is falling apart, and so is beginning to question it, or the person whose dream world is going very well, and so he or she is totally lost in the dream?

The normal human condition is not recognised for what it actually is: deeply unwell.

We see our ignorance and yet often choose to do little or nothing about it, as if to live in ignorance will not cause suffering for ourselves and others.

The conscious decision not to seek wisdom is an *unconscious* decision to deepen in suffering.

It is wisdom to see that truth is, ultimately, unavoidable.

We might be able to find some relief from our troubles by believing in delusions and illusions, it's just that the relief will be partial and temporary.

Truth is the *only* way to *really*—fully and finally—dissolve emotional suffering.

Suffering is rooted in ignorance and delusion, and so, teaching truth is the ultimate act of compassion. 'Explaining and spreading truth is beyond all charities.' said the Buddha.

Any truly effective way of resolving emotional suffering is effective in that, in some way, the person is now seeing and relating to a situation in a more truthful way. Truth is the *essence* of any way which really resolves suffering.

There are many different approaches to psychological well-being, but, in so far as they are effective, essentially what they are doing is bringing us into deeper, wider and more intimate contact with our experiences, assisting us to discern the truth and reality of these experiences, and to live in harmony with that truth and reality.

The *essence* of psychotherapy is to assist others or ourselves to see the *truth* of one's experiences—truth which enables ourselves or others to see the value of those experiences, and so, to accept them, but also, a truth which enables us to work with those experiences in the most beneficial way.

We need to understand the origin of our negativity, that is, of the ignorance and delusion at its root, if our negativity is to be fully and finally dissolved.

The *only* way to resolve our negative emotions is to see through the delusions which are causing them. If I see through a delusion I can no longer believe in it, and it is no longer possible for it to have a negative influence upon me—seeing that the "snake" is only a rope lying in the grass how can I be afraid?

The truth is therapeutic by nature.

Truth is healthy, and delusion is unhealthy.

Truth is healing.

The truth does not fear or hate, and is not sad or angry. The truth dissolves fear, hate, sadness and anger.

Beneath each negative emotion is a negative belief, a delusional one; but there is also a missing truth, the converse of the delusion, which will bring peace, happiness and love.

Why should our suffering continue? One reason might be that the learning which the suffering is there to bring forth has not yet been learned or *fully* completed. And, if one is still suffering emotionally that is indeed the case.

Overall, our deepening experience of truth and reality are inevitably associated with deepening well-being. Conversely, increasing delusion and illusion are inevitably accompanied by increasing lack of well-being.

Wisdom and psychological well-being deepen together.

Overall, there is an inverse correlation between truth and suffering—as one increases the other falls. However, within that overall progression there are times when increasing truth will, temporarily, lead to increased suffering. But, this is because the dawning truth is not yet sufficiently complete.

Partial truths can be painful to hear, but the *completion* of these truths is very sweet. For example, ‘The truth that she doesn’t love you may be very painful, but the deeper truth that you are Love itself will be profoundly fulfilling.’

Why is it that the truth has not brought peace to me? Maybe it’s not the truth; or maybe it is only a relative or approximate truth, not the absolute truth; or maybe it is only part of the truth; or maybe I do not yet fully believe this truth—some opposition to it still resides somewhere within me.

The lesson (wisdom) implicit in a major challenge or trauma may have many aspects which may take quite some time to be revealed.

What is experienced at first to be a great tragedy and loss will gradually unfold and unfurl to reveal many truths and gifts.

Time does not heal our wounds, *only* wisdom can do that. If *real* healing has occurred, it has done so because somehow we have acquired greater wisdom.

Ultimately, there is no choice but to work with what is before us. We may avoid it for a while through suppression, neglect, diversion, running away or some other strategy, even suicide, but inevitably, sooner or later the situation will reappear in its *essential* form, forcing us to develop the wisdom and capacities required to accept and transform it, and so, to grow. Does this sound trite? Yet, but how much of our lives is spent suppressing, avoiding or running?

At some level he has come to welcome his problems—although unsought—for he knows in advance that each one is due to some degree of blindness, and that by working with the problem he will eventually see a little better.

Each problem is redeemed by the wisdom it eventually offers.

Any truly effective way of resolving suffering is effective in that, in some way, the person is now seeing and relating to a situation in a new and truer way.

Can a drug give you wisdom? And yet, it is only through deepening in wisdom, in whose light we can freely choose new and better psychological and behavioural expressions, that we can improve our psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is not about inducing temporary states of reduced negative emotions and enhanced positive emotions along with some naturally associated pleasant thoughts which do not reflect any insight or wisdom or deepening insight or wisdom; for such a state will sooner or later be undone by the re-emergence—often catalyzed by challenging outer circumstances—of a person's negative thinking, due to a lack of wisdom, with all the negative emotions and behaviours that follow from this negative and unwise thinking.

To manipulate the brain, for example through drugs, is not to heal the person, but only to temporarily induce or enable some more agreeable psychological states. Healing cannot be effected this way, through the “outside” so to speak. Healing can only be truly effected from the inside, where the person, the consciousness, understands and releases its attachments to the finite forms of consciousness and, in doing so, dissolves negative emotions and allows the Depths of consciousness to be progressively realised and expressed. Essential, indispensable to this process is the deepening of wisdom which, by nature, dissolves attachments.

Truth is the only real healer of the mind and the emotions.

Our unwillingness to face our fear, anxiety, hatred, anger and sadness, keeps us trapped within these experiences, and the delusions which underlie and support these experiences. But our willingness to face these negative experiences brings about an understanding and dissolution of the delusions beneath them, and therefore, freedom from these experiences.

To allow a negative emotion to go by unchallenged is not a neutral affair. If a negative emotion is allowed to go unchallenged, say by overlooking it and quickly moving onto the next experience, then the emotion and the delusion underlying it become stronger. We must use mindfulness, self-inquiry, re-contextualising, or some other technique to defuse these negatives.

Every upset, large or little, is an opportunity to deepen in wisdom—to find a deeper truth, or to affirm an existing one. Trite? Maybe, but how many opportunities do we let slip by?

If you don't look at something openly, don't fully experience it, you can't really know it, its truth and reality. Does this sound too simplistic?

By bypassing suffering we bypass looking at the delusions which inform it, and in doing so we bypass the opportunity to deepen in wisdom—but don't worry, because the delusions are in place, the suffering will return, and you will have yet another opportunity.

Negativity—of thought, emotion, imagination, memory and conduct—is rooted in delusion. Delusion is innocent—we simply don't know any better for the moment, we're naïve. Naïveté is the natural condition of a Soul finding itself in this world. This is to say that negativity is a natural and unavoidable part of our development. However, the potential for wisdom, and therefore, to dissolve our negativity, is also present within us, and will prevail.

What is the fundamental place of suffering in the scheme of things? Ultimately, it is benevolent. When we are thinking wrongly about life we feel negatively—we suffer emotionally. Our negative thought and emotion attracts to us, inwardly and outwardly, similar and corresponding experiences—and so, our suffering multiplies. Finally, we begin to question our view of life and our conduct based upon it—to do so *sincerely*, means that we have to some degree *surrendered* our old way of thinking about life. In this state of surrendered reflection, insights, more truthful ways of viewing life, gradually appear. Seeing and living life through this greater truth will resolve our negative emotions, our suffering, and open us to greater experiences of joy, love and peace, greater vitality and energy, and greater aspiration and enthusiasm.

When you have problems—which are characterised by a degree of suffering—you bring to them, more or less consciously, your beliefs about the nature of reality—about yourself, others, the world, and the Spiritual. And in this context you see and attempt to solve your problems. But what if your way of looking at yourself, others, the world, and the Spiritual is deeply and pervasively flawed? What if you are not the ego-body but infinite-eternal Awareness of which the ego is an expression? What if the world is not a self-existent material reality independent of Awareness but solely an expression of that Awareness? What if life is solely Awareness and Its manifest expressions, and this sense wholly Spiritual? What if this Spiritual existence is operating according to the laws of karma, attraction, compensation, rhythmical oscillation between opposites and evolution? What if this evolution is essentially one of deepening or increasing discovery of one's inner Divinity which is self-sufficient, perfect and complete, with a corresponding dissolution of dependency on the world and other externals? What if suffering is a major catalyst for our growth? What if all of this is correct, but consciously or unconsciously you believe none of it, or at best, have not regarded it? Then what real possibility is there of attaining the deep and lasting solutions to the problems which confront you?

The history of Mankind's suffering—unimaginable in its magnitude—is the outworking of His ignorance. What is most required in this world is the deepening of wisdom.

We can only be well by living truly.

There is no deep and lasting peace in delusion.

Only deep truths bring deep peace.

Stand upon delusion and be afraid; stand upon truth and be afraid of nothing.

It is *only* our ignorance or delusion that keeps us in bondage, restricted, imprisoned, that prevents our freedom.

Only the truth is truly liberating. Complete truth is completely liberating.

Truth opens up our experiences, our lives, and us.

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24. Truth and Positivity

Seen through the eyes of truth *all* of life or reality is good and positive. Therefore, at the root of each negative emotional response to life is a delusion—a wrong view of the situation before us. To resolve the negative emotion we will need to expose the underlying delusion and, simultaneously, uncover the truth. The truth enables us to see the positive nature of life, its goodness, and to feel joyful, loving, and peaceful. As we deepen into the truth of life we progressively see the goodness of life, and we progressively feel positive about life. Deepening truth and deepening positivity are inextricably linked. It is not possible to be positive about life in any deep and consistent way without a corresponding depth of truth. And it is impossible to be negative about life when this depth of truth has been found.

Someone committed to truth is alert to the possibilities for growth which negativity brings: negativity in our outlook and feeling alerts us that we are looking at life wrongly, but also, it extends the invitation to find the truth.

All emotional negativity is rooted in delusion—wrong thinking. Therefore, a commitment to addressing and resolving emotional negativity is a commitment to addressing and resolving wrong thinking—that which underlies the negativity—or, stated more positively, a commitment to addressing and resolving emotional negativity is a commitment to truth.

How can you think positively about something that you think is negative? Most people cannot think positively about life to any great extent, or with any great consistency, because deep down they believe that life is in some ways negative, not good. Depth and consistency of positive thinking require a deep understanding of life or reality which reveals its complete goodness. This is to say that a deeply positive view of life requires deep metaphysical maturity.

Positive thinking, if it is to be full, deep and enduring, must be based in, reflective of, and in accord with, reality and truth.

Life is completely good: Its essence, the Soul, is absolute Goodness; each of Life's finite or particular experiences embodies and reflects something of this Goodness; and each of Life's finite experiences is best suited to help us discover this Goodness and to create those experiences which ever more greatly reflect this Goodness. In this context, we can learn to become completely positive.

The truth sees everything as a degree of Goodness.

One very great opportunity and advantage for the person who has intellectually-intuitively learned the truth of life is that he or she can be completely positive about life, for the truth is that life *is* positive—absolutely good in Its Essence and more or less good in each of Its expressions. But this opportunity is not available for those who are to some extent trapped in delusion and, consequently, who cannot *but* see life as negative or bad in proportion to their wrong beliefs.

The person who has seen the truth of life not only has the opportunity to be completely positive, for the truth is that life is completely good, but he also sees the necessity in being completely positive, for Life is inescapably moving us toward the complete understanding of the truth of Its goodness, and to the thought, feeling and conduct which expresses and reflects this truth.

When we are suffering, underlying it will always be some sort of negative thought along the lines of, 'I believe that I need such and such, and believe that it is not, cannot, or will not, be part of my life.' The emotional response to such thinking is always negative where sadness and anxiety result. If it is believed that the situation is not just or fair, anger and hatred will also result. Negative thinking is a way of looking at oneself and life as not being good. From a Spiritual perspective, all of life is, in fact, good. Therefore, negative thinking is really an inaccurate or untrue way of looking at life. Therefore, with any negative thought, if we inquire *deeply enough* we will see that it is untrue and, conversely, see the truth of the situation. This truth reveals that all is actually okay. In part, finding the truth of a situation can be difficult because the truth often challenges our fundamental and habitual ways of looking at ourselves and life. Because our negative thoughts are ultimately untrue we need to ask of them questions such as: Is this true? Why? How do I know this is true? Am I certain this is true?

Negativity always points to wrong thinking of some kind.

The greater the depth of emotional suffering, the greater the strength of the negative belief which is being activated. The greater the strength of the negative belief which is being activated, the greater the strength of the delusion which is being activated. The greater the strength of the delusion which is being activated, the greater the strength of the delusion which is being challenged. The greater the strength of the delusion which is being challenged, the greater the wisdom—the

converse of the negative belief—to be discovered. The greater the wisdom to be discovered, the greater the blessings of wisdom to be experienced.

Life is inherently good, and so a negative belief, which more or less states something to the contrary, is in fact a delusion. If there is sufficient ability, we may dig down and find the delusion(s) upon which the negative belief rests. But, this is not always easy or immediately possible when the negative belief is or rests upon a *core* belief which we mistakenly take to be true and reflective of reality, for example, that we are the ego, or that our value depends on what we can do, or that our existence is dependent upon the body, or that our lives end with death.

Emotional suffering, from the mild to the extreme, is always grounded in a negative thought of the order, ‘Someone or something I need has been, or will be, denied.’ This type of thought is negative because there is a belief in deprivation and also, there is the experience of suffering as fear, anger, hate or sadness. A negative thought is always grounded in delusion. The delusion is always of the order: ‘My fulfilment is *dependent* upon *this* person or thing or experience which I have lost or will lose.’ Thus, we arrive at the fundamental equation of: the greater the degree of suffering, therefore, the greater the degree of negative thinking, therefore, the greater the degree of delusion. We suffer because of our negative beliefs which are grounded in delusions, where these delusions are being challenged by Life. The essential delusion which is being challenged is the belief that the particular person or thing or experience which is or will be denied to you is *necessary* for your fulfilment. This is false. By the very fact that someone or something has “stepped out” of your experience or will do so, Life is showing you, unequivocally, that he or she or it is no longer needed—at least for now. Instead, it is time to fulfil your needs in another way, either through another person or thing or experience, or, by taking the ultimate step: to fulfil that need from within yourself—to find the love, joy, peace, power, beauty, goodness, wisdom, virtue, or reality within yourself. This latter step is done by first acknowledging that when one of these Qualities is arising in one’s experience, it is arising from *within oneself*, although it may be activated or evoked by someone or something external. Second, we must learn to discern that these Qualities are nurtured through living with integrity, love and non-attachment. The more that the Soul is honoured in this way, the more these Qualities will emerge from within, either indirectly by being evoked through outer circumstances, or directly as inner and spontaneous emanations. Third, when these Qualities arise, we stay with these inner experiences, commune and converse with them, hold them appreciatively yet lightly, and in doing so, allow them to deepen.

Can we be identified with the ego and think positively? The ego as a self-image is inherently fragile and always under threat from the vicissitudes of life. The ego as the conscious states or experiences from which the self-image is built-up or constructed is always in a state of flux and change. The inherently unstable and fragile nature of the ego means that when we are identified with it we are more or less always in a *constant* condition of anxiety. Further, identity with and attachment to the ego causes a condition of inherent lack or emptiness—something we attempt to fulfill through dependence on outside conditions (people, places,

things, etc.) However, as these outer conditions are inherently unstable, again we are in a state of more or less constant anxiety. We see here that any real depth and constancy of positive thinking and well-being when we are identified with the ego is not possible.

Identity with the ego, and participation in the ego's view of the world, are mostly illusion. Therefore, positive thinking for the ego is, to some degree, always about being positive about maintaining an illusion. But, the Soul within and Life without are working toward the ever-greater revelation of truth and reality. The ego can stay relatively positive as long as it can maintain its illusory world—but this can only go on for so long.

The ego loves its negativity: not only can it build a self-image around suffering, and squeeze some perverse pleasure out of it, but more importantly, negativity keeps us stuck in delusion which prevents us, or distracts us, from seeing the truth of what is—including that the identity with the ego is a fiction.

The ego loves its grudges, hates, judgments, disparagements, conflicts—its negativity. But the Soul, seeing life through the eyes of truth, refuses to live in negativity.

It's funny how I say that 'Such and such a situation caused me to suffer.', as if the situation itself, and not *my view* of the situation, was responsible for my suffering.

Emotional suffering is ultimately imaginary, that is, it is caused by our deluded and illusory way of viewing life.

Yes, we can be optimistic about life, completely, always—but not if we place our artificial expectations upon it.

Seeing life through the eyes of the Soul, through truth, reality and love, there is no negativity.

A problematic situation, one involving emotional suffering, is finally solved when we come to see that it is not actually bad, but rather, the situation before us is good, for it is something essential, necessary, for our further growth and development. Seeing this truth, we can appreciate and accept the situation, and further, we can work with it to maximise the growth and the good which it is there to bring forth.

There is nothing which is actually negative; in the light of truth everything is understood and experienced as good. Negativity is always, invariably, the result of seeing the world through ignorance (or false belief). Don't let a negative experience persist or slip by unattended, for this is to indulge ignorance. Find and shine the light of truth onto the situation to see the goodness in it and to feel positive about it. Every negative experience is a chance to affirm or reach for the truth, and the positive experiences grounded in that truth.

Train yourself so that whenever you begin to experience negativity you will immediately say ‘Negativity! Wake up! You’re having a delusion. What, instead, is the truth?’

Through the eyes of truth, everything, every experience, is seen as good—no exceptions—and so, through the eyes of truth we are inevitably positive about life. Deepening truth and deepening positivity are positively correlated—inevitably so.

The truth of life is completely positive, therefore, the Spiritual path, which is a movement from delusion to truth, is also a movement out of negativity to being completely positive.

The deeper our wisdom, the more the perfection of life is experienced.

As wisdom deepens, so too does optimism. Wisdom and optimism are inextricably united, waxing and waning together.

Knowing and living the truth brings tremendous contentment and joy: life is known to be good, and our path is the increasing revelation and experience of goodness.

Truth and happiness are inextricably tied, and so, if you are committed to the truth forget about remaining unhappy, and if you are committed to happiness forget about being dumb.

The combination of truth and a commitment to positive thinking is powerful indeed.

Positive thinking eventually becomes a necessity, for it reflects, expresses and deepens the truth that life is completely good, and, that Life is inescapably moving us to this conclusion.

First and foremost, positive thinking, based in truth, is for its own sake, because it feels good—the more positive and truthful the better it feels.

Deepening truth and deepening well-being cannot be separated.

Positive thinking feels good—if it doesn’t, it’s not *really* positive thinking.

To feel good from the positive thoughts which we are thinking, we must really believe in what we are thinking, this is to say, we must believe that what we are thinking is not only positive, but also true. If we are thinking positively in the sense that something is, or will be, the way we *wish*, but we do not *actually* believe that this situation is or will be this way, then sooner or later our “positive” thinking will only serve to elicit a negative reaction. So, we must *begin* with finding and affirming positive thoughts which we *actually* believe to be true. As we proceed, other and greater positive thoughts, in which we can believe, and which feel good, will arise, either spontaneously or through our further reflection. We can then affirm these thoughts.

A thought cannot be truly positive, that is, generate sincere positive emotions, unless we believe it to be true, or, almost certainly true. Therefore, when attempting to become more positive about a situation, our work is to find a way of looking at that situation which is both positive and true or almost certainly true. Then, we need to affirm, in whichever way we can, through affirmation, visualization, imagination, memory, action, etc., this new and positive thought so that it becomes firmly established. From this established position, we can then reach forward for the next, and even more positive, thought.

Your starting point with positive thinking around an ideal is to envisage and affirm that which you know in your heart to be true or almost certainly true about it. Energise this thinking as much as possible through repetition, visualization, behaviour, and the emotions, and where all of this is done with focus and clarity. Life and the Soul will respond, through the law of attraction and grace, by providing further truths concerning your ideal. These truths can then be added to your positive thinking.

The secret to successful positive thinking, intention and imagination, successful in that it effects positive inner and outer change, is to have truth as their foundation and power. For this foundation, sooner or later gives a genuineness of belief or conviction to what is being thought, intended and imagined, which in turn, naturally evokes positive emotion. In turn, this genuine positive belief (conviction), thought, intention, imagination and emotion attracts to itself, through the law of attraction, more of what is similar, from within and without.

We must base our positive thinking on truth, otherwise it will lack any real conviction, and therefore, any real power.

The practical and powerful way to approach positive thinking is to find a new way of thinking about a situation which is more positive—in that it makes you feel better—than your current view, where that new perspective is one which is true, and, you more or less know it to be so. Though affirming the truth it will deepen within you, and be supported by Life outside of you. Then, look for the next, more positive and truthful perspective of the situation, and repeat the process.

Seeing the full value of right thinking, we learn to reverse the normal relationship between thinking and action, and make the first of primary importance.

Why is continued and consistent positive thinking so difficult, at least initially, for most people? It requires that we do not run into, and get caught in, any delusions and the negative consequences of which they speak. However, how many people are significantly free of delusions when they first decide to undertake, in a significant way, the practice of positive thinking?

It's generally insufficient to *simply tell* a person to be positive, for there is a lack of wisdom which means that she is *unable* to see life in a positive way. Instead, it is much more fruitful to assist a person to a *deeper understanding* of her experiences

whereby she is able to see her life and herself more positively.

To really understand life is to really understand that it is completely good; and from here, it is impossible *not* to think positively about life.

To see or experience badness or negativity is really a departure from reality and truth—which is inherently positive and good.

To *fully* understand an experience is to appreciate it.

The pessimist is bound to be “disappointed” in the end, for Life is irresistibly moving us toward the realisation that It is composed of varying degrees of goodness grounded in absolute Goodness.

From one perspective the Spiritual path is that of increasing, and finally complete, positive thinking, for reality, what actually is, is completely good. Our path is one of dissolving the delusions and illusions, along with their negative emotional reactions, which obscure the goodness of reality.

Truth dissolves negativity, and complete truth dissolves negativity completely.

To see a situation as bad only means that we are not seeing it clearly or fully.

The ignorant have no choice but to see and experience life unrealistically and negatively. The wise have no choice but to see and experience life realistically and positively.

Looking at his life through the eyes of wisdom and love, he comes to realise that it has been, is, and will be profoundly good.

When someone is negative, see the truth that she cannot see the truth which always sees the good and the positive; she is caught in ignorance and, for the moment, does not know any better.

Negativity and deeper truth are incompatible.

To be negative is a departure from the truth of life, a departure from seeing life as it actually is.

Negativity is the condition of being delusional.

When we have fully absorbed the truth of life, negativity is impossible.

Optimism is the natural condition of a wise person.

The more fully we see the truth of life the more fully we see that life is good, and on this foundation we can be truly positive about life, in fact, it becomes impossible to be otherwise.

A commitment to deepening truth is a commitment to deepening positivity; a commitment to deepening positivity is a commitment to deepening truth.

As we mature, we come to focus more and more on the positive, mainly because it is increasingly difficult to find anything that is *really* negative.

Once sufficient wisdom has been gained, he can no longer take his (or their) negative beliefs seriously.

If we take life too seriously, it is because we are engaged in some sort of misunderstanding.

Can he pass through the day without any complaints, that is, without any negativity, that is, without any delusional thinking? Probably not, for old, old habits die slowly. But just to witness this madness, to recognise it as such, is probably enough.

It's not that negative thoughts do not arise anymore; it's just that he no longer believes them.

Due to past conditioning negative beliefs or thoughts still arise, but now, due to her training they arise in, and are defused by, a deeper and wider context of truth.

So longstanding and entrenched is our habit of negative thinking that it takes a little time and effort to turn it around.

Shall we hold the world responsible for our negativity? Or shall we take responsibility for how we are negatively seeing and reacting to the world?

Ultimately, inescapably, you will become completely positive in your outlook and expression—so why not dispense with all negativity *now*?

When we see that pessimism is deluded, we can dismiss it easily.

Bring yourself to a point where any negative thought immediately falls into the brilliant and invulnerable light of truth within you, and disappears.

We can dissolve negative thoughts, including our judgements of others, in four essential ways; 1) by surrendering the negativity to the Divine, knowing that Divine will clear away, in Its own way and time, what is false 2) by simply being mindful of the negativity, which will cause it to atrophy and die through lack of affirmation while at the same time creating a calmer and clearer “space” for a more truthful and positive perspective to appear 3) by inquiring into or investigating the negative belief to find the delusion on which it is based and, the positive truth which will replace it 4) by immediately seeking for, affirming, and living a more positive thought which is intuitively or rationally or logically known to be true.

He comes to see that there is enough negativity in the world without his deliberate contribution.

We often indulge negativity—sadness, anger, hate and fear (in their various forms). Why? We believe that it will bring about positivity!

Positivity cannot come through the *continued* practice of negativity.

As we mature, negative thoughts become increasingly and inherently distasteful.

Negativity can lead us to the point where we see that only positivity will do.

The path of negativity is also, ultimately, a path to positivity—a much longer and more painful one.

Eventually, the firm conviction to avoid negativity arises, for she clearly sees that indulging negativity is contrary to her well-being and the well-being of others, contrary to her growth and evolution, contrary to her destiny, and contrary to truth and reality.

On the one side, inextricably tied together, we have delusion, illusion, negativity and suffering, and on the other side, wisdom, reality, positivity and well-being.

Being positive, viewing life as good, which is true, is, as a condition of joy, love and peace, intrinsically good, and so needs nothing more, and yet, this way of being naturally attracts greater goodness to and from within oneself.

No-one has yet cultivated goodness through badness; practicing badness only serves to deepen badness. Goodness begets goodness.

Don't stop with feeling just okay with a situation, deepen your insight further and feel great about it.

The only *real* high is that which comes through knowing and living the truth.

Live in positivity: *continuously choose* the most uplifting inner and outer experiences, and where there is something less than uplifting, find a higher way of seeing it so that it feels uplifting.

Although we may unintentionally delay it somewhat, *overall*, life just gets better and better.

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25. Truth and Growth

What is the single most essential and effective element required for inner and outer change or transformation? When insight actually occurs; when there is a real shift from delusion to wisdom; when light penetrates the mind and the heart.

Insight into a situation instantly transforms it.

When does real change, emotionally, morally and behaviourally occur? Only when there has been a change to a new truth, or the deepening of an existing one. When will the next real change occur? Only when this (or another) truth is succeeded by a higher or deeper truth, or, when there is the deepening of an existing truth. Without this change of truth, any change will be forced and temporary.

A true insight carries with it the force or power which has the capacity to shape our psychology and conduct.

Truth is the *essential* transformative agent.

Truth is the only real agent of transformation.

Truth is *the* key which unlocks our potentials.

Wisdom, in particular lived wisdom, and Spiritual growth are inseparable—they rise and fall together.

Just to *continually* bring to mind and to meditate upon the great truths—not least, that she is not the ego but Divine Awareness in which life appears as ideas—will put her psyche under serious pressure: old conditions will be disrupted and broken down, new values and aspirations will arise, new challenges will need to be faced, new responses will be required, and a new reality will emerge and beckon.

Profound truths transform the psyche in fundamental ways. These truths progressively work their way upward and outward from the core of our Being, transforming all that they touch.

Because identity with the ego lies at the core of many of one's thoughts, beliefs, attachments or desires, emotions, and self-expressions, increasing dis-identification with the ego has profound reverberations and ramifications throughout one's consciousness and life.

Wisdom sees things differently, more deeply, more accurately, more positively, and in doing so transforms our experience of ourselves and the world.

Wisdom, integrity, surrender and love are alchemical agents which touch and transform the experiences of our lives, even the apparently dark and ugly, so that they reveal their inner and hidden beauty.

Wisdom loves everything that it touches—for it sees the true nature and value of all that it encounters.

Wisdom and love are tied and deepen together. As our wisdom deepens into the knowing that *all* is One Divine Awareness and Its expression, then naturally we love all that is more and more deeply; and as all is more and more deeply loved, we are practicing and strengthening our wisdom regarding the unity and Divinity of life.

Love is the feeling counterpart of truth. As wisdom deepens so too does love. When wisdom is complete, so too is love.

Sometimes there is a change of our experiences where someone or something *new* and more Spiritual appears. But on other occasions there are no changes of experience, no new experiences, but instead, the *same* experience has somehow become more Spiritual—which is to say that it has become more transparent to its Divine essence. And this has occurred because we are seeing and relating to the experience in a new and deeper way, somewhat free of our old and superimposed layer of delusions and illusions.

The truth transforms the way we understand life. The truth also transforms our experience of life, either by drawing us to new experiences or by drawing them to us, or, by dissolving our delusions illusions to reveal the full depth and beauty of our experiences—new or old.

As we change, our experience of the world changes.

When we see the truth of something, we naturally come into our proper relation with it, and it naturally falls, for us, into its proper place in the scheme of things.

Clarity and depth of thought—intuitive, rational and logical—is essential for bringing clarity and depth to the other areas of one’s self-expression: to one’s emotions, values, motivations, conduct and imagination.

‘Character is fate.’ said Heraclitus. A person of wisdom and high character naturally relates to each situation constructively.

Why is our progress, and in general, humanity’s evolution, so very slow? The work of dissolving delusion, or more positively stated, of cultivating truth and wisdom, is correspondingly very slow. Why is this? Ultimately, it is just the way things are for now.

We look at things in terms of years, decades, a lifetime, but Nature also looks at our development in terms of centuries, millennia, and many lifetimes. ‘Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.’—Lao Tzu.

Why is change so slow or not occurring at all? In some way we are blocking the reception of, or failing to live up to, a deeper truth—the knowing and living of which would effect real change.

The truth is that you are not the lead player in determining your greater development. The key situations, ideas and aspirations which have shaped your course for the better have all been *given*—by your Soul.

What is the most effective way to transform yourself and the world? Deepen into the realisation an expression of your Soul.

The instincts of survival, sex, social attachment and power can pass through the filter of identity with the ego and be used in support of maintaining and enlarging that identity, or, they can be redirected, through wisdom, to fuel the realisation of one's Spiritual nature. For example, the survival instinct can be shifted from survival of the ego to survival as the immortal Soul. The sex instinct can be shifted from physical unity to unity with the Soul, and from seeking to continue life through physical reproduction to the continuance of life as the Soul. The social instinct can be shifted from a physical and social unity with others, to a deeper and fundamental unity at the level of the Soul. And the instinct of power can be shifted from an expression of the ego to the true power of the Soul.

Through wisdom and some degree of will, the instincts can be progressively redirected from serving the animal, to serving the human, to serving the Spiritual.

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26. Teaching and Learning the Truth

Teachers come in many forms, some obvious and some disguised, some pleasant and some painful, some kind and some cruel, some imparting their lessons quickly some slowly, some teach through the mind some through the heart and some through experience, some appear inside while others appear outside, some teach consciously others blindly, some are concerned with essentials some with details, some are effective others less so, some are recognised others are not, and some are appreciated some are not—but all are needed.

To some degree, in some way, every experience teaches us something—*all* experiences teach.

Some of our commonly unrecognised or unappreciated teachers include our enemies, suffering, the body, nature, older age and death.

As many Spiritual teachers have discussed, all things have essentially the same nature and are governed by the same fundamental laws or principles. One implication of this is that all things, no matter how apparently big or small, are potentially teachers of the deepest realities and truths. Another implication is that all things, no matter how apparently big or small, can potentially teach us about all other things—everything can teach us about everything else.

Is the nature of the Divine, and are the great laws of life, absent from the small things? Ralph Waldo Emerson did not believe so, and continually showed us that this is not so.

The Higher Soul and Higher Self are the only real teachers, for it is the Higher Soul and the Higher Self which are the source of our insights or truths regarding our experiences. Even when we hear or read of a truth, still, there is an apprehension and resonation from within which affirms that this is indeed the truth—this too is from the Higher Soul or Higher Self.

When someone comes to you with a real problem, his Soul holds the answer—your role is to assist him to access and live that answer.

The *essential* role of a Spiritual teacher is to assist the client or student to a greater receptivity to, experience of, and harmony with his or her Soul.

The heart of a Spiritual teacher's role is to help us understand how we are seeking to develop and maintain a false identity with the ego, how we can progressively release our identification with it, and, simultaneously, how we can come to more deeply experience and give to expression to the Soul and Its Qualities.

There is a perfect match between what Life is presenting from without and what the Soul is teaching from within, and this is so because essentially the Soul and Life are united and one.

The Soul and Life have Their unique teaching program for each person, and if you are going to assist another you will need to be in harmony with this program.

At each point in your life, the Soul within and Life without are seeking to reveal to you certain truths, those which are needed and appropriate at that time for your unique situation and development. Your work, or the work of those who are assisting you, is to uncover and live *these* truths, and not to impose other truths which, at least for the moment, are not needed or are inappropriate.

Part of the art of assisting another is being able to discern where she (or he) is in her development, and to discern the next steps that her Soul and Life are asking her to take. Our assistance must be in harmony with and supportive of this greater movement.

To attempt to teach another when he or she is not yet ready shows, somewhat paradoxically, a lack of wisdom within the teacher.

Part of wisdom is knowing when and how to help, including when and how to impart wisdom.

Guidance or advice given when it is not wanted only tends to invites resentment.

Until there is real interest and motivation another will be impervious to our attempts to assist him. We should respect his level of developmental readiness, just as others should respect *our* level of development.

If what we will say or do will break down another's belief system and way of life based upon it, we need to ask whether that person will be able to manage the deconstruction, in particular, whether he or she will disintegrate into a worse state, or be able to move up to a higher level.

There is more than enough work to be done with people—and indeed upon oneself—who are *open* to the exploration of Spiritual matters, and who are sincerely looking for Spiritual guidance, support and inspiration, than to be too concerned with attempting to crack open or “convert” hardened minds and hearts.

How intent is someone, are you, about finding the truth? One key indicator is to see how much time and energy is really being devoted to this undertaking.

Words, spoken or written, can profoundly illuminate and inspire another, but the speaker or writer can be humble through seeing that Life and the Soul have long prepared that person for the illumination or inspiration.

A written or spoken truth may transform us profoundly, in a moment, but it is Life, in its entirety, which has prepared us for that radical transformation.

The words moved her because she was ready for them.

When the mind and heart are ready, just *one* word can activate an in-pouring and outpouring of inspiration.

Sometimes a profound truth comes like a lightning flash in the night sky, but, only after much conscious and unconscious preparation has occurred—sometimes stretched over many lives.

If a person is ready for and needs to hear the truth, then she will hear it, regardless of whether or not you are around, but, you may have the *privilege* of being the messenger of that truth, and of passing it on in your own *unique* way.

The teacher, writer or artist sees that he or she is as dispensable as anyone else: if he or she does not produce what is needed, the Divine will find another source of supply. And so it is the teacher's, writer's or artist's *privilege* to create and to give.

A person must see the truth of her experiences for herself—must *own* that truth. Someone else's truth about her experiences will not do—although, it might be the *beginning* of her truth and its ownership.

Each of us must somehow own the truth for him- or herself. While we can be assisted in this endeavour, the essence of it is inescapably our responsibility and work.

A good teacher not only assists students to find the truth, but assists students to find the truth independently of external assistance.

Imparting truths to people has its place and its value, but assisting people how to find the truth for themselves has a greater place and value.

What does it matter if the words which have been passed down to us from prophets or teachers are accurately recorded and are true? Ultimately, each person will need to determine if what is read or heard is true and real for him- or herself.

If we passively accept the teachings of another—who is present in person or indirectly through recorded teachings—we may indeed benefit greatly, *if* what we are absorbing and believing is indeed true. However, to *passively* accept teachings is, by definition, not to actively affirm them through developing and using our powers of intuition, feeling, reason and logic, and by drawing upon our own experiences. To continue in this manner—of passive absorption and belief—is to leave ourselves relatively undeveloped, and to leave ourselves more or less, and ultimately, helpless, for what source of external teaching can be consistent, comprehensive, detailed and unique enough to meet our ongoing needs?

Imparting truths to people has its place and its value, but assisting people how to find the truth for themselves eventually has a greater place and value.

It's much more important to look inside yourself than inside a book—but if a book can assist you to look inside yourself with greater ardour, awareness and wisdom, it has been useful.

It has been said that 'A virtue pressed too far becomes a vice.' Mature engagement with the great books of philosophy, literature, mysticism and poetry teaches us not to overvalue books as a way for deepening wisdom and cultivating character.

Almost anything that is written or spoken by even the greatest Spiritual teaches can do with some qualification, elaboration or clarification. Don't rely upon or expect too much from the spoken or written word—there is also the contribution to its understanding which you must make.

We cannot expect a writer, particularly in a short space, to include, explain and qualify everything. To some extent we need to add what is required for a more complete, detailed and nuanced account.

Some books, the important ones, we keep coming back to us at points in our lives, for there is more to learn. It is the same with some of the important situations in our lives—we revisit them, albeit in somewhat altered form, for there is yet more to learn.

Just as we must make our way through life by following the Heart, we must our make our way through the world of books in the same way—tuning into what is right and essential for us at any given time.

It is part of being a good Spiritual teacher or writer to be able to discern what is *most* important and essential, and highlight this to the student or reader.

After all is thought, read, spoken and heard, we only tend to remember and carry with us a handful, or heartfelt, of distilled and essential truths. There is a natural tendency in human nature to distil essences, especially truths. It is part of Nature's way of having us focus upon what is most necessary and valuable. In our pursuit of wisdom it is here, with the essentials, that our *emphasis* must lay, for it is the essentials which are the fundamental truths which integrate, explain, show the relevance and importance of, and enable us to relate rightly to, the details.

From the course of a long conversation, perhaps one or two or several key points or truths tend to be remembered. Much can be said for the position that, despite appearances, it is the person who most clearly articulates these essential points or truths who has made the most important contribution to the conversation.

In and of itself, extracting the essence of something, what is fundamental, most important, most needed, and what is most real and true, is of great service to oneself and to others.

To be able to clearly see and articulate the essence of a matter—what is important and what is less so, what is central and what is peripheral, what is primary and what is secondary, what is fundamental and what follows, what is the issue, the point, the meaning, the truth—is quite a rare capacity.

Out of all of this reflection and reasoning we must distil the essential, clear and practical principles by which to live our lives.

To discern the essentials of our experiences is an expression of wisdom.

Grasping the essential or central truth is only the first stage. It must now be unfolded so that its details are made explicit and clear, and its implications understood and integrated.

Being able to tolerate and allow, at times, confusion, murkiness, uncertainty, disorientation, disorganisation and darkness, is fundamental to the search for truth.

It is as much a mistake to believe that you have acquired no truths, no absolute insights, as it is to believe that there are no new truths, or depths of existing truths, for you to discover. Whereas the latter position closes you off to greater knowing, the former will leave you lost and directionless, and probably anxious and frustrated. A middle way is required.

To find and recognise a sane person is to find and recognise your own sanity, for you cannot do the former without the latter.

What you have learned, *your* truth, is embodied in the way you choose to live; and the way you live is the primary way in which you teach.

Does the Higher Soul, the depth of oneself, have anything to learn from our journey or sojourn through this life? Yes: through *us* the Higher Soul is experiencing and learning how Its Qualities and the Divine Archetypes are being expressed as, reflected in, and embodied by, the finite forms or experiences of life. The Higher Soul—the Depth of oneself—knows the Truth and Reality of Itself and the Divine World, but, through you or I, It is learning how this Truth and Reality are reflected and expressed in *this* world.

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27. The Truth of Ignorance and Delusion

Ignorance itself does not know it is ignorant, and stupidity itself does not know that it is stupid.

Ignorance and stupidity are not bad or evil—they are innocent. By their very nature they cannot see a better way—not really.

Encased in ignorance, he is impervious to the truth.

To some extent, stupid or unwise action is not consciously recognised for what it is, and therefore, is not a culpable condition.

Whether seen in others or in oneself, stupidity deserves our compassion and not our condemnation.

How shall we define evil? Evil is the deliberate infliction of suffering from hatred. But, the complete definition is: Evil is the deliberate infliction of suffering from hatred where the hatred and infliction is due to the perpetrator's *ignorance* or *delusion where he or she knows no better*.

Servants of the darkness do not fully realise the nature of the darkness, for they lack a higher experience of the light by which to compare the darkness to thereby see its inferior nature.

As wisdom deepens, it comes to appreciate and accept that ignorance and delusion also have their place.

To despise or disdain ignorance or stupidity is itself a form of ignorance or stupidity.

It is one thing to discriminate and another to judge—the one is act of wisdom, the other is not.

Seeing that the deliberately harmful act of another, or of oneself, was due to ignorance or delusion, where, at that time, one did not know any better, is one of the essential keys of forgiveness.

Forgiveness, true forgiveness, is always an act of grace, for it requires a change of heart which ensues from the reception of a deeper truth about the situation at hand, a truth which enables one to accept and even appreciate that situation. This deeper truth or insight comes from the Soul.

When we are angry at someone, we are so because he (or she) has transgressed what we believe is the right way for him to express himself, and, additionally, we believe that he could have expressed himself differently. But, generally, the truth is that the person could not have done better because he could not see any better or, he lacked the will-power to execute the better. And, while coercion may force the person to change his self-expression, unless he acquires wisdom and power, his self-expression will revert back when the coercion is lifted.

When we feel antagonistic toward someone or some experience, perhaps toward life itself, we do so because we believe that the person or experience or life is depriving us of our fulfillment. But, if we can find a deeper way of relating to that person or experience or to life, where we can relate with acceptance, appreciation and integrity, we shall find fulfillment within, regardless of the outer circumstances.

Ignorance and delusion are innocent, for by their very nature they cannot see a better way. Self-identity with the ego, that is, the belief that one *is* some sort of self-image and the mental states which are encompassed by that image, is simply a position of ignorance and delusion, and so, of innocence.

The ego—that part of our thinking identified with a finite structure—can be highly intelligent, but is lacking in wisdom.

Essentially, to be born is for the Soul to give “part” of the formless Awareness that It is to the finite experiences of this world. When we are born we are more or less aware of being the Soul and Its Qualities. However, we are born with a relatively limited power of knowing. In particular, we lack the capacity to reason and for self-reflection. In this condition, our natural way of relating to our experiences is to shun those which are physically or psychologically painful, and to attach to those which are pleasurable. As our attachments multiply and strengthen we lose awareness of the Soul and Its Qualities and are left only with our finite experiences. As our power of knowing gradually develops—because the Higher Soul and Self are progressively beginning to influence us—we only have this restricted range of finite experiences to know and with which to work. In this condition it is natural that we reach wrong conclusions about who and what we are, about the nature of the world, and about how to conduct ourselves. In particular,

we mistakenly identify ourselves to be the ego and the body, we build up our whole mistaken ego-centred “reality”, and we live from this perspective. But, the *origin* of our delusions and ignorance and what follows is the lack of knowing power which is a natural part of being born. Further, we are born when the Soul gives “part” of Itself to be aware of the experiences of this world as part of fulfilling Its destiny. This It does as part of the wider and *ineluctable* unfolding and evolution of the universe which is occurring through each Soul. Ultimately, this unfolding and evolution of the universe has no purpose—it is “simply” a spontaneous expression, through each Soul, of The Spirit, the source of all that exists. Thus, our ignorance and delusion and their consequences are natural and inevitable aspects of the unfolding of the universe.

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