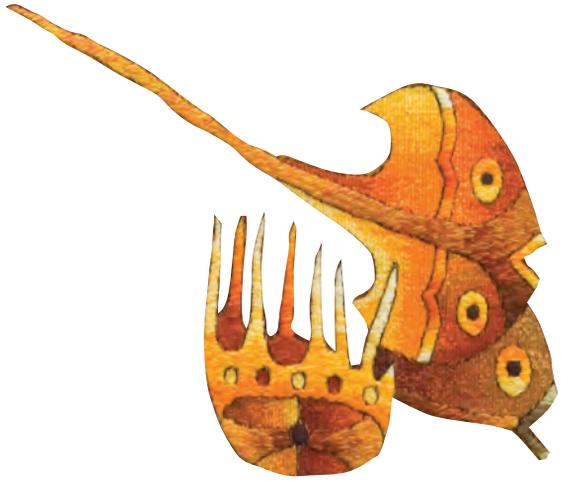
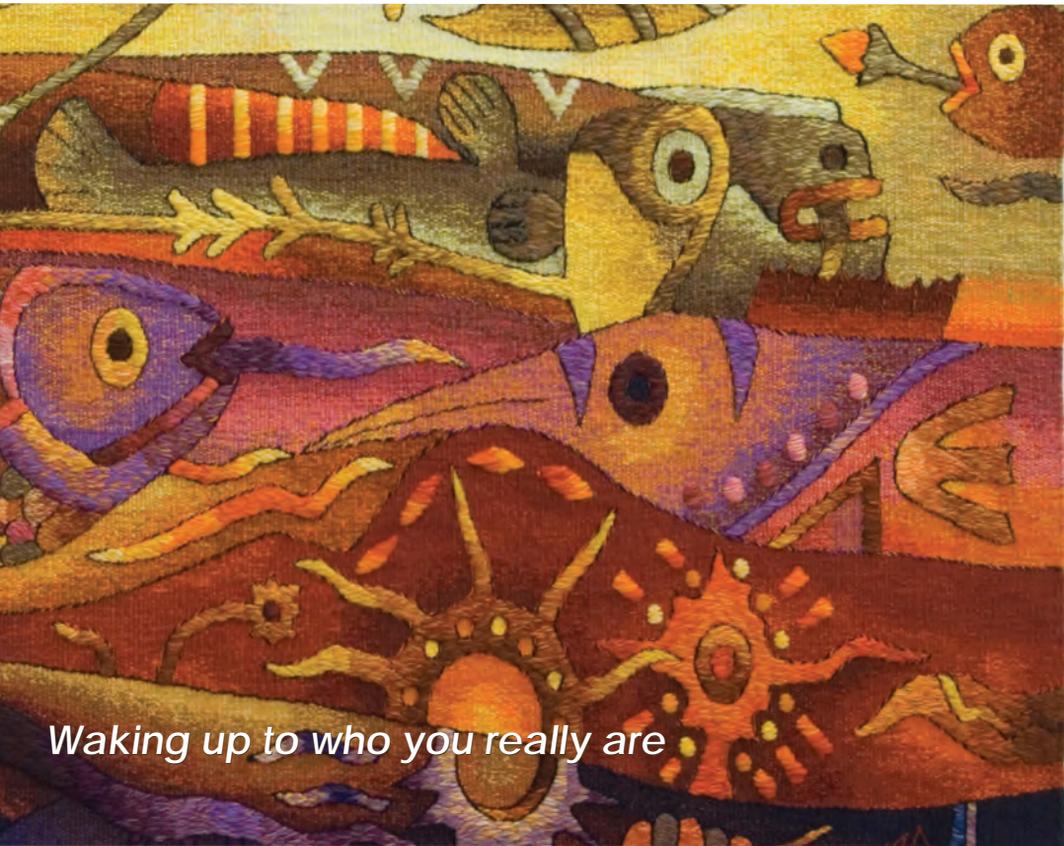




NON-DUALITY PRESS



J.C. AMBERCHELE
**The Almighty Mackerel
and His Holy Bootstraps**



Waking up to who you really are

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and
His Holy Bootstraps

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THE ALMIGHTY MACKEREL AND HIS HOLY BOOTSTRAPS

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps if something is said over and over a hundred different ways, it will finally sink in. And perhaps not. But if it is *seen* just once....

This book is an offering by the Absolute; an expression of a realization ultimately had by no one. Part I is comprised of 15 essays. The dialogues in Part II are based on conversations with five other incarcerated men over a period of four years. The author is indebted to these men, and to the English philosopher and spiritual teacher Douglas E. Harding for the awareness exercises and many of the terms presented in this book, and for his unique and incomparable expression of non-dual wisdom.

May these essays and dialogues lead you to the center of your being, the only Being there is. They are, in the final sense, messages from you to you.

FOREWORD

One reason why awakening is so difficult to share is that, because it is so easy to see, nobody believes it. Another reason is that it is so devastating to the ego, so threatening to the idea that one is a separate self, that it is deeply feared. Those who say that awakening requires great struggle and many years or lifetimes to achieve are those who aren't ready for it, who prefer to remain a separate self, a seeker on the path to enlightenment.

And that is as it should be. Ego consciousness appears as a necessary step on the road to egoless awakening, for how could ultimate absence be seen here if there were no presence imagined there? And after all, ego consciousness is not a mistake, for who is there separate to dream it up? Who other than What You Are – the Totality – dreams anything up?

Then why do anything? Why strive to awaken when even the lack of awakening is What You Are? The answer, of course, is that there is no one separate from What You Are to exercise the choice. The impetus arises from No-thing and appears within the All, and in the case of this particular self, it appeared as an unquenchable thirst in several forms:

First and foremost, I wanted respite from my past – anything that would relieve the shame of a life dedicated to selfish pursuits at the expense of others. I knew that the answer would have to be radical, as radical as death itself, for nothing I had previously read or been told or practiced in the areas of psychology or philosophy or religion had had any meaningful effect. The burden of being who I thought I was was just too heavy.

But I had once had a glimpse of the freedom I was seeking during several LSD sessions in the 1960s, and I knew that

the answer lay within. And after viewing a Joseph Campbell series on PBS in the 1980s, the quest began in earnest to re-discover that sense of freedom and how I could capture it and hold onto it and solve the problem of my life. Guided mostly by intuition, I began reading anything that seemed related to my LSD experiences, namely the wisdom teachings of the great sages of India and Tibet and China, as well as the Christian and Sufi mystics. Mostly I wanted confirmation of what I had momentarily seen and somehow knew to be true – although I couldn't say what that was. The search was on, and it was relentless. It was as if I had boarded a train I couldn't get off.

And there was ego gratification in this search. I was now on the Great Path, a true seeker/follower, involved in something more meaningful and more important, I figured, than the efforts of any corporate CEO or Head of State. This was the Big Question, the Holy Grail, and I was hot on the trail of it. What better reason to continue?

But below the surface there continued an impossible and confusing longing for someone or something to fill what felt like a gaping hole in my chest, appearing and reappearing on the surface as a crippling sense of worthlessness and loneliness. I was writhing inside with a lack that not even the identity of a spiritual seeker could fill.

There was also the question of life and death and spending the rest of the former in prison. I was convinced I had wasted my life thus far, and I was compelled to no longer do so. There was the matter of presence – I was present, I was here, I had been born into this world and was still alive, and I wanted to know in the time I had left just what this “life” really was, what “I” was, beyond my name, my past, or what others saw or called me. I couldn't imagine how others could seemingly spend their entire lives without wondering why they were or what this universe was that they supposedly found themselves in. How did this happen, how did I happen, and why was I aware? What was awareness?

There was also the abiding sense of being “different.” I wasn’t satisfied with the explanations of others, not of religious leaders or scientists or even the sages I admired. I wanted to know, to experience for myself what the Great Ones were talking about, this mystery that lay at the heart of the world’s wisdom teachings. I wanted to know it, not know about it, and I approached whatever was said with caution, with doubt.

And the more I read, the more I was told that I wasn’t who I thought I was, that the world wasn’t what it seemed, and, moreover, that I, as who I really was—this Presence I felt—was none other than the center and the source of the universe! The message was certainly radical enough, and if it was true, it just might mean that I would discover the answer to my questions, not to mention the solution to my woes. But was it true? How would I ever know for sure?

And then one day, after years on the search, I read an article by a man who told me to point at where I thought I had a face and look at what I was looking out of—and instantly all of the questions were wordlessly answered. I *saw*, actually saw, what I was, and *knew* what all the sages had been talking about—it was so plainly obvious, so totally available, so Here, and there wasn’t the slightest doubt as to Who it was, Who *I* was. And I was no-thing: void, empty, wide awake, boundless, and nothing at all like I thought I was. Here, who I thought I was was gone, replaced by the scene. Gone as a separate self, and one-hundred-percent present as Presence Itself.

And yet to this day the separate self remains, like a favorite robe, slipping comfortably on and off, seemingly of its own accord. This all-too-human idea, astonishing in its complexity and power, although no longer central, no longer believed or identified with, like an intimate and loyal friend, is found to be *inside* of Who I Am, inside of this Awake No-thing, along with everything else it is interdependently linked to, which is the universe itself.

And remarkably the impetus continues. No longer a quest, the destination now revealed as the beginning, still it unfolds, delights in its enthusiasm and endless disguises, dances and laughs with itself, knows itself as the Mystery of Mysteries, and in that unknowing is both surprised and content.

PART 1

TRUTH

There are truths and there are untruths, and there are a myriad of renditions and gradations of each. And then there is Truth. Truth has no opposite. There are no different versions, no degrees or shades of Truth. Truth be told, truth cannot be told. Thus it is said to be unsayable, spoken of as unspeakable, described as indescribable, for it is no-thing, is void, empty, absent even of absence—and for this reason is Presence Itself.

Truth is timeless. It has no beginning or end. Therefore the way and the goal are the same, and that way and that goal is Looking To See. All the religions of the world fall short of Truth because Truth is not religious. Everything that has ever been said in the name of God or Buddha or Self can be discarded in favor of one look. For only Looking To See will open the gate to Truth.

The proposition is that at the very center of your being lies Truth. That which you think is “your being” is not “yours” but is Truth Itself. You have no separate being apart from Truth. You as who you think you are have nothing to do with it, nothing to do with anything except as Truth having everything to do with Itself.

Because Truth is at the center of your being, it is easy to see. But like a man peering through his glasses searching for his glasses, it is so easy to see that you miss it. In fact, Truth is what you are, where you are, when you are. It is never anywhere or any when else because there is not anywhere or any when that you are not. Truth is everything that you see, hear, touch, taste, think, or feel because there is nothing outside of what you are. Truth is Who You Are, seeing only Yourself, and you are both the seer and the seen—simply

said, you are Seeing Itself.

Thus the directive is to look. Look back. Look at what is looking. Turn your attention 180 degrees from where you normally look “out there” and see the awake emptiness here where you are. Notice that it has no edges, no boundaries, is infinite in scope; is pure, clear, transparent emptiness, and for that reason is open capacity for the world, is luminous space wedded to what fills it, always right here, always nearer than anything because everything fits within it.

This seeing who you are is not mysterious or vague or somehow veiled. On the contrary, it is simple, concrete, available. Likewise, it is revealed in simple, childlike ways, ways that might seem ridiculous or naive to those of us who value what we have learned and who we have become.

To anyone steeped in objective thinking, the sage may seem a simpleton, a fool, especially when that sage lifts his hand and points an index finger at his face and tells us he sees he is the source of the universe, that in place of a head he has the world, that should we bother to check in like manner, perhaps we would discover the same.

For Truth cannot be reached by intellectual understanding. Talking and reading about Truth is not the same as seeing Truth. Words can become a barrier and, far too often, an escape from the realization of Who You Are. But for seekers of Truth, however many paths are taken, the arrival is a single step through the eye of a needle, and that step is not a word but a look, is not outward but inward. And what does one see here? Surely not the eye of a needle but an Eye as vast as the cosmos, an Eye that holds and beholds all that one is – the universe itself. Look, and see for yourself!

-

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Forget trying to change yourself (as if you could forget that!). Drop the idea of improving your situation (as if you could drop it!). Let it go (as if you could let it go!), because it will never happen to who you think you are by who you think you are. Who you think you are is a regional appearance, and a regional appearance cannot move or act on its own any more than a shadow can. That separate self, that individual person you think you are is an objective manifestation of this Pure Subjectivity, and as such is one among an endless number of manifestations conditioned by an infinite array of interconnected forces and events.

But change is the reason you became a spiritual seeker, you say. Having tried everything else—money, sex, alcohol, drugs, sports, shopping, television, video games, marriage, family, therapy, religion—and finding no relief from the angst, the fear of being trapped, of being imprisoned in a body, of being helpless, powerless, inconsequential in the face of the unimaginable vastness of the universe, of never being free from the feeling that something is missing, you have come to the mystics and seers for the answer, for the bliss and fulfillment they offer.

And yet you are aware that suffering is part of being human. This is what it is like to be a regional appearance, one among many. Being in the world, a human being is a victim of circumstances—good or bad, peaceful or terrifying, abundant or hopeless. It is the nature of a “thing” in a world of things to arise, to suffer experience, and to pass away. This is what being human is all about: joy, beauty, pain, loss, triumph, defeat. It is *lila*, the play of *maya*, the great dream we dream and believe to be all there is.

But it isn't all there is. The dream character you think you are is not who you really are; it is only one of your appearances, while you are so much less and so much more. In fact, you are all the way less, better said as *No-thing*, and all the way more, better said as *Everything*, and all that lies between.

And you would settle for halfway measures, for the comparatively paltry human experiences of bliss and fulfillment, as if that were the real goal, as if that were God. Why not go for the granddaddy of all improvements, which is the perfection of Who You Really Are? Because Who You Really Are, right now, is perfection itself!

And this is the answer to the question of self-improvement: that, for whatever reason, call it grace or divine intervention, you finally decide to look and see and be This Which You Are. As Jesus of Nazareth is said to have said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, and the rest shall be added unto thee."

Because you cannot improve *yourself* and then become enlightened. You don't perfect the appearance you identify with and reach a state of Buddhmind or union with God. There is no "becoming" awake, because you are Awakeness Itself. So the apparent improvements you seek as a separate self, if they come at all, come as a *result* of seeing and being who you already are. And come to *all* of your levels of appearance, quarks to galaxies. In the light of the divine Awareness that you are, all are beneficiaries: atoms, molecules, cells, humanity, life, earth, stars—your true "body," which is the universe. All "beings" are enlightened when you see the Light, because all beings are inside of the One Luminous Awareness that you are, and therefore *are* you.

And what might be some of these improvements? What might show up at the level of *yourself*, body and mind? Bathed in the awareness of Pure Subjectivity, your atoms, molecules, cells and organs may experience less stress, more harmony, and you may notice lower blood pressure and

heart rate, fewer colds and flu, the absence of heart disease or cancer in your life, or even the reversal of such diseases that are already in place. You may live longer—and do so with more energy, with less ego drama; not having to put up a front, worrying less (or not at all) about what others think, or even about what *you* think, psychic and physical energy is allowed to flow unimpeded from you, its Source.

You may be inspired more. You may be more creative. No longer trapped in a mind and body, you may use your mind and body as it can best be used, meeting each situation with openness and equanimity and the propensity to solve problems rather than create them or complain about them.

You may enjoy life more, savor the world in all its sublime variety, even discover the difficult times to be sought-after adventures. No longer seeing yourself as a tiny speck in a vast and unforgiving universe but rather as the all-encompassing Capacity in and from which the universe appears, you are empowered beyond compare. In fact, you are the power behind all that is. You lose fear of the unknown because nothing is unknown. You lose fear of dissolution because, as No-thing, you are nothing to begin with, and as Everything, you are, well, everything!

Love becomes possible. Vanishing here as a “self,” you make room for “others,” and joy emerges. Humor flourishes, for what could be sillier, more ironic, than this banter between Self and Self? What comedy or tragedy could surpass this wondrous play of Being?

Anger may arise, but never hate. Sadness and grief may appear, but not despair. Seeing everything inside you, where is there cause for greed or envy? Even your troubles are blessings, invitations to return to Who You Really Are where no troubles, no mistakes exist.

And where once again you are reminded that ultimately there are no “improvements,” not at the level of your human appearance nor at any other level, for Who You Really Are is whole and wholly perfect, exactly as you are. For how, as

Aware No-thing, could you possibly improve who you are when you are literally nothing, no *thing* that could change? And how, as All Things Appearing In Aware No-thing, could you change when you are all possible changes and all that could be or not be changed? Where even the idea of improving *yourself*, the urge that originally brought you to the mystics and seers, is finally seen for what it is: Who You Really Are dancing with Who You Really Are.

It was, after all, never about “you.”

CHOICE

Do you have free will? Can you choose what you like and avoid what you don't? Is it built in, as you suppose? A God-given right?

Consider this: When you meditate, can you stop your thoughts for more than a minute or two? Can you control the content of your thoughts? Are you even sure they are *your* thoughts to begin with?

Or this: The scientific description of perception includes the odd fact that you are living in the past. By the time light reflects off an object, even a nearby object, and enters your eyes where it is then processed into electrochemical messages and sent along the optic nerve to the brain, a fraction of a second has elapsed. What choice could you exercise in the present moment if the moment has already passed by the time you are aware of it? Or are you living in a future that is already determined and about which you can only surmise? By the time you are aware of anything, even this thought, is it not already gone?

And this: Science says that the bodily impulse to act—to move your hand, for instance—occurs an instant *before* you think “move hand.” If you are not choosing to move your hand, who is? How is it that before you choose to do anything your body is already doing it? Are your thoughts redundant? Are “you” perhaps redundant?

Did you choose your gender? Did you choose your parents, your environment, growing up? Did you choose your life, including all of the losses and disappointments along the way, and would you choose them again if the opportunity arose?

How is it you are certain you have free will, when the

evidence suggests otherwise? It seems true; effect seems to follow cause, but is it real? If the ego is no more than an idea, a bundle of thoughts and feelings centered on the body, then who really is choosing? An idea? A bundle of thoughts that call themselves “you”?

Free will seems valuable because to lose it is to lose the “self.” Or so it appears. To remain who you think you are is to the ego a matter of life and death. So if you hear from a spiritual teacher that there is no choice, you might then go around deliberately trying not to choose, or interpret “no choice” to mean “going with the flow,” passively accepting “what is” and trying to live “in the moment.”

But there is all the difference in the world between passively accepting “what is” as who you *think* you are, and actively intending what happens as Who You Really Are. The former is a recipe for frustration; the latter is freedom itself.

“Then I’ll drop the idea of a separate self and become Who I Really Am,” you say – as if you, a bundle of thoughts, could choose to do so, as if you could drop decades of conditioning just like that. No one drops anything precisely because there is no separate one who could do so. The human being you identify with is a completely conditioned aspect of the Whole, is an appearance of Who You Really Are, and as such can neither choose nor act on its own. And it is not a question of free will versus determinism, for neither applies to Who You Really Are, which is No-thing/Everything. As No-thing, there is no one who could choose and nothing that could be determined. As Everything, what could exist apart from the All to choose or be chosen, determine or be determined?

If you believe you are a separate self, the discovery that you have no choice can be freeing indeed. It means that you have never made a mistake, that every act and every thought has been conditioned by an infinity of forces beyond your control – that in fact you have no control over anything

whatsoever and therefore are not responsible for your past. Everything in your life has been perfectly essential. Gone is the guilt for what you thought you had done, gone the shame for who you thought you were. Gone also the need to blame others, for others are no more responsible for their acts than you are.

But this freedom is temporary, for it is an experience of the separate self, the mind and body with which you identify, and like all experiences in and of the world, it doesn't last. It is momentarily freeing, or it may come and go, but it is not the freedom of Who You Really Are, which is not a feeling, not an experience (although it may appear in the body as such), not an event. Who You Are is prior to isolated events, prior to experiences, prior to such concepts as freedom or bondage, free will or determinism. As a separate human being, you are an integral part of an infinite cosmic display and totally at its mercy. As Who You Really Are, you *are* that display.

The difference then—and as always—is in where you place your identity: “out there” with your mind and body, or right Here where you can plainly see you are No-thing. The difference is between being only human and having no choice, or being the One Chooser of all that appears (which you are anyway!). And this identity shift is said to be the result of grace, for who you think you are cannot make it happen—and yet it happens. And when it does, when Seeing sees Itself, that which is chosen is that which *is*, and that which *is* is that which is chosen. They are not separate. Intent and the result of intent are one and the same, and what you are is what you have always been—the Sole Intender.

See. Look at looking and see that you cannot find another Presence anywhere, that all is within you, that all will is therefore your will. How could it be otherwise? No matter what the thoughts, when are you not Who You Really Are? When are you not the Chooser, responsible for every last bit of Who You Really Are?

EXPERIENCE

Enlightenment is a state of pure bliss that you will eventually attain through meditation and mindfulness and other forms of mind training. It may not happen in this lifetime or the next, but even if it takes a hundred thousand lifetimes, it will happen. And when it does, you will know only joy, love, beauty, pleasure, freedom and fulfillment. You will finally be awake. In the meantime, you may have "glimpses" of enlightenment, and these experiences will help to spur you along, help you to drop your defilements and train even harder to become a perfect being. And the best part is, all of this will happen to you, to yourself, for how else could enlightenment be experienced if you aren't there to experience it? When you are enlightened you will know it, you will feel it, you will live it!

The above is at best an exercise in wishful thinking and at worst a message of profound ignorance. And yet millions of people believe it to be true. So what's wrong with it?

The Buddha taught "no-self." He claimed that our essence, like the essence of all phenomena, is emptiness. This "void-nature," he said, is what we really are, and realizing what we really are is the end to our suffering.

If there can be a definition of enlightenment, then according to the Buddha it would have to be that there is no one to be enlightened! If what you are is emptiness, who is this "you" to be enlightened? Who is there to experience bliss or, for that matter, to experience anything at all? The sanskrit word *dukkha* is translated as "suffering," but might it not also be taken to mean "experience," as in "suffering experience"? Enlightenment, then, as the "answer" to experience, cannot be an experience. It is no-thing. It is awake

and empty Space prior to thoughts and feelings.

Unlike thoughts and feelings, including joy and suffering, Who You Are does not come and go. The question is, are you that mind and body having those experiences, those sensations and thoughts and feelings? Or are you the awake Space in which they happen?

This is not to say that experiences don't appear to happen, that thoughts and feelings and events are not experienced. They do appear to happen, but do not define Who You Are, and are not "yours" as who you think you are. Here at the center of the universe where you are, there is simply nothing. Clean, clear awareness and nothing else. No mind, no thoughts and feelings, no experiences. Looking to see confirms this. Here, you are truly mindless, and all that you once considered "yours"—your thoughts and feelings, your experiences—are seen to be "out there" in the world. The distinction is crucial, for when you see that here you are free of experiences, you see you are free of the grasping and aversion that goes with them, free of saying, "I did or felt this, this happened to me," and thus free of defining yourself as a thing among things, a separate self and no more, an ego in constant need of reinforcement in the form of "personal" experience.

Crucial also because, free of experiences, you are free to *be* experiences. Not to *have* them, but to *be* them. Being room for them, you *are* them. You are simultaneously the One Experiencer and all that is experienced. No longer having a mind as a separate thing, the world is your mind. The world manifests moment by moment as all physical and mental phenomena, and it is Who You Really Are, manifesting. Experiences are then more vivid, more beautiful, more precious, when there is no "you" here to claim them as your own. They are not then "your" experiences, but What You Are, functioning, expressing Itself.

But, you say, it is so much better to actually *experience* What I Am rather than to read about or be told What I Am.

True, and this is the value of Seeing, of the Vision as opposed to the Word. And it is also true that Seeing is not an experience like other experiences, in that it is always the same, is cool, impersonal, altogether out of time, and does not happen to an “individual.”

So you are Space for the world, for experiences, and all that comes and goes in this Space is what you are, manifesting. It is once again a matter of where you place your identity – “out there” as only one of your appearances (in the form of the mind and body that others see and say you are); or right here as this empty and aware Space filled with the scene (including whatever objects and thoughts and feelings, whatever appears to be happening that constitutes “experience”).

The above, of course, *tells* you what you are, but only you can *see* what you are. Looking to see is the answer. Words fall away in the immediacy of the vision. As to your experiencing enlightenment at some future date, awakening does not, will not, cannot happen *then*. It is immediate and timeless. And awakening does not, will not, and cannot happen to a “you,” to who you think you are (no matter what you think). Enlightenment isn’t a happening. It is who you really are. So there is nothing special about enlightenment; it is not a wondrous and unique event. It is that which you have always been: empty aware space filled with the world. It is that which you cannot not be! It is the recognition of This-Right-Now by This-Right-Now, and there is absolutely nothing that is not This-Right-Now.

Source, No-Source

Why is What I Am the source of everything that is? Because what else is there? What could there be to be apart from What I Am? Consciousness is the source of everything because there is nothing that is not Consciousness. There are not two here—source, and other than source. Therefore, nothing is really created. So the word “source” is misleading, for there is no thing here creating another thing there. The drama appearing on a movie screen is not created by the screen. It appears there, oned with the screen. In the same way, everything that is, is What I Am, “appearing” here on the “screen” of awareness. Actually, it is not really “appearing.” It is as it *is*, exactly as it is presented, and is What I Am.

The same is true of “becoming.” How can I become what I already am? How can I become awake when there is only Awakeness, when there is no separate one to awaken? Awakeness just is. Presence is always present, is never absent, and cannot therefore *become* Presence. So the belief that “someday I’ll become awake” is erroneous.

But this reads as gibberish to anyone who thinks he or she is separate from Presence, from Oneness, from What I Am. It is as if Oneness pretends it were twoness, so that a world appears, and suffering appears, and love appears, and perhaps the “return” and the “understanding” and the “Beatific Vision” appear—or perhaps not. It could be said—as if there were two—that you are aware Space or Room or Capacity “here” for everything that appears “out there,” thereby emphasizing that which you have been conditioned to overlook—your aware emptiness “here.”

Instead of fixating on objects out there as we are accustomed to do, the directive is to “Look back at what you are

looking out of,” turn your attention inwards upon itself, attend to this empty aware Space you are coming from. And upon seeing empty awareness – and it can be seen – it is also seen to be “filled,” to be oned with that which appears “out there,” so that void and form are now seen to be void/form: not two, not separate. Thus all that is, is “empty” of selfhood, of intrinsic existence, and is not apart from this empty Space, this aware Capacity for all that is.

This is what you really are. You are not simply what you think you are, a separate person with a separate consciousness inhabiting a separate body. This is merely a belief handed down by parents and peers and reinforced by society second by second all of your so-called “life.” What you really are is Presence, Emptiness, God, Buddhamind, Atman-Brahman, Consciousness, Self, and all the terms attempting to name the unnameable no-thing/everything that you are. In fact, you are not even alive. All of your aliveness is in that which fills you, which in its totality is the universe itself. You are pure empty awareness, and your body is the scene, or world, that “appears” in that awareness. Who you think you are as a separate person is thus replaced by the scene, ever changing, appearing and dis-appearing in the forever now-awareness that you are. You are simply This, said to be “functioning” as anything and everything that is. You are the source, no-source of nothing but yourself, and you are no-thing/everything.

WHATEVER YOU SAY

Whatever you say I am, I have to agree with. Call me any name in the book, I'm it. Throw the whole book at me, I'm the book. Here in this transparency, who is there to resist? My only "who" is where you are, is you and what you make of me, is my "truth" for as long as it lasts.

The way it works, the more I defend a self-image, the more I am challenged. The more I resist, the more I am attacked. What I make of myself I project onto the world, and back it comes, often threefold. Thus, believing I am a mind encased in a body, I believe there are "others" with minds in bodies, and automatically I am in a position of confrontation, separate and alone. Believing I own the thoughts I experience, I believe that others own thoughts as well—about me. I grow afraid, defensive, angry, learn to manipulate, to role-play, to get what I can while pretending to be civil. I am "fallen." I am living in "sin."

But without these beliefs, I am What I Am—transparent awareness, filled with whatever arrives, which happens to be Myself appearing as "other." Then there is no projection, for there is no world other than What I Am.

And it is not a matter of adopting new beliefs. Without the lie, I am What I Am—it is my natural state. However, even *with* the lie, I am What I Am, though I don't see it. So it's not a matter of getting rid of old beliefs either (as if I could). What I Am is prior to belief, and can be seen regardless of the thoughts that come and go, and once it is seen, the beliefs may lose power immediately or may hold sway for years and then abate slowly, may even seem amusing or comical, like stubborn old friends. The point being, they are not the point. They are not Who I Am, they appear *in* Who I Am.

And because they show up here as part of the world, the fact remains that I am the author of those thoughts and beliefs and the world they both create and happen in. There is no separation here. It is all Who I Am. I am responsible for the Whole of it, and I revel in the perfection of it, the precision, the beauty. It is Who I Am, mirroring Who I Am, turning Itself back again and again with a smile. Reaping what I sow, I fall so that I might rise and know that I have never fallen, have not for a second as the Son strayed from the clarity of the Holy Spirit or the arms of the loving Father. Form is void and void is form, and What Is is What I Am.

The truth is: Whatever you say I am, I say about Myself.

KNOW THYSELF

Who are you? How well do you know yourself? Growing up, did you think that everyone but you knew who they were, knew what they wanted? Do you know yourself any better now? So who are you, really?

And if you say you are no more and no less than a human being, consider the fact that the body you say is “you” is made up of billions of individuals called “cells,” each alive and cooperating as a whole in such a manner as to boggle the mind of science itself, a veritable world of your so-called “parts” operating below your level of consciousness, with no input from you. Your circulatory system, your digestive system, your immune system – do you know how you do it, can you keep track of these comings and goings?

Or how about your genes, your chromosomes? Who are you at the molecular or atomic level, how do these trillions appear and disappear and hold together under your name, and is it you who are reading this sentence or is it the combined effort of a multitude so vast as to defy the imagination? How did they follow what was said?

For that matter, where do your molecules and atoms end and those of the world begin? How do you draw the line separating what you call “you” from the endless continuum of wavicles you call the “universe”? Do you think of yourself as a question of density, a walking, talking demonstration of mass-energy equivalence? Or as an apparition of probabilities, a living world of sub-atomic particles whose brief and mysterious visits somehow depend on the presence of an observer? And who is this observer?

But perhaps you can best be defined by that which you need in order to be you. Certainly you need all of your inner

subordinates and their workings—quarks to organs—but so too the outer: the air, water and sunlight, the earth to nourish you. And what if there were no galaxy, no universe? Why would you call all the matter and energy inside your flesh body “yours,” and all the matter and energy outside “not yours,” when you need both to survive? Put another way, why limit yourself to the scope of touch and taste, and claim that certain smells and sounds and sights are “outside” you, when in fact your body extends as far and wide as you can smell or hear or see? Senses are global, and so is thought. All that you can possibly think of, all time and space and all that lies within them is your body, is inside you.

Is the universe conscious? Yes, because you are conscious. Does the universe see and hear and taste and feel? Yes, because you see and hear, taste and feel. Does the universe display intention? Of course—because you do, in whatever form it takes. Your true body is the universe, and all that happens is you, happening. Why pretend otherwise, when what you are is so blatantly obvious?

Know thyself!

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