

You Don't Know Your Real Potential...

The voice wants to be silent, but it will have to speak a bit. Tonight I would like to complete, if possible, the theoretical aspect of the retreat and then, for the remainder, to move into practice. But I think some souls who are on (let's say) the *shaktopaya* division of the field of sadhana may find the theory useful in shifting from the symbolic to the Real.

In the last meeting, we spoke about the binary of identity and difference. And that is, in a certain sense, the way that the ancient division between being and becoming has now morphed into a new discourse. But it is perhaps the first duality that must be overcome to reach *mahasukha*. There must be an integration that is equivalent to a superposition (a kind of Schrödinger's cat analogy) to the fact that we do not ever know who we are because we are always in a process of becoming different from who we were a minute ago, a day ago, or a year ago. We are morphing at whatever rate of speed, and that is accelerating now with the increase in extreme events in the world, and the sense of uncertainty and self-doubt is also much more extreme because of that morphing. Difference is taking the lead over identity as a force of internal power to affect our consciousness.

Every time you learn something new, every piece of information you previously had that created your frame of reference about reality suddenly shifts—it takes on a different value. One new piece of information shifts the whole thing. Everything becomes different, in the same way that a Ptolemaic view of the universe suddenly, with Copernicus (with one shift in which the sun becomes the center rather than the Earth), changes the entire picture of the universe. Our place in it and the nature of humanity, etc. all cascade in a shift of collective consciousness into an entirely new paradigm. In the same way, we have gone through many paradigm shifts that have been, in a way, forced on us by shifts in the governing ideological structures of the social orders we have been born into and indoctrinated into.

So let's see. I'm going to call these *The Seven Core Dualities*. Clearly, you could (because the nature of language is to structure all concepts in terms of pairs of opposites) . . . you could add many more like hot and cold, high and low, up and down, whatever. These are the core dualities that have, I think, the psychological impact to hold one in a place of perplexity and immobility in terms of continued development of consciousness versus affording the freedom to master the paradox that is involved in all of these.

We've seen that we are in a state of both **identity and difference** and that they are both different and not different from each other. Eventually our identity becomes the capacity for creating differences and transcending them, whether those differences appear in the world or in language or in the grid of meaning that we have superimposed upon reality.

But the identity and difference become integrated, and then we realize that the dualities of **inner and outer** are actually not separate. What you perceive as an outer world is 99% made of your own projections. It's your inner world that comes back to you through karma. The outer world is not separate from your inner world. The ego wants to believe there's a self-standing world out there and that it relates to that with its own freedom, its own agency, etc. But no, the world gives birth to the subject; and the subject constantly influences it, is influenced by it, and ultimately is

not different from the world, from nature, from the collective consciousness. We are embedded in it, and we have no identity ultimately different from that. The outer world that the ego thinks it is perceiving is not external to its perception. It is our own mind that we are seeing writ large—expanded as world but not other than that—including the character that we have been identified with, which is simply part of that panorama. So those two have to be integrated.

Freedom and determinacy (at first, I had written **freedom and dharma**), because there is always an ethic involved that constrains one's freedom. But in the larger sense, there are forces that determine our thoughts and our behavior. It's not necessarily the determinacy that physics can no longer find but a kind of sense that there has to be some sort of reliability and consistency—both in the behavior of the individual and in the expectations that we can have of the world—or else it flies apart into chaos (which is what is happening now because of the lack of trust that others will keep their promises, which you see writ large). Russia no longer believes that the U.S. is worth negotiating with because it doesn't keep its promises, it breaks its treaties. There's no point in diplomacy or talking anymore. So you have this issue of freedom from rules and ethics versus the need for some kind of determination and order, even if you're not happy with the order that exists. There has to be some orderly way of creating a new order without falling into chaos, which is one of those things that's basically up in the air at this point.

Then we have the duality of **detachment and engagement**. When you reach a certain level of your essence (of your being), there is a natural care—the Karuna that we have talked about, that wants to be of service, to function as a bodhisattva, to be engaged. But there is also the desire to be emancipated from the bondage of engagement—to detach, to enter into solitude and a freedom that has no obligations to another (that has the ability to follow the calling of the heart rather than obligations created in the past, perhaps, when one was not in touch with one's heart but acting inauthentically in accord with the demands of the Big Other). So there is this tension within between these two polarities. There has to be a way for us to engage bodhisattvically with the world but to do it in a state of total detachment and dispassion, without losing our compassion and our capacity to care, because we are not caring for another . . . we are always caring for the Self.

When that is resolved, then we can resolve the duality between **the part and the whole**, because we are both. The term that science uses now is that we are *holons*—we are a part that contains the whole, while the whole contains all parts, not even as parts but as essential essences within itself. This is, in fact, the definition of the hologram and why, I think, the holographic theory of the universe has become so popular and so scientifically validated. There is a fractal capacity for an understanding of the whole in our intelligence, even though we cannot know the details of it. We can know the essential nature that enables us to be in harmony (the part in harmony and resonance with the whole), because we are not different from it. So it is that capacity to recognize the wholeness that is directing the particular, rather than the particular at odds with the whole or clueless about the whole . . . the oneness of the part and the whole.

And then, as we spoke of before, **the yin and the yang**, which shows up also on the archetypal level as Shakti and Shiva, if you will—the Goddess and the God as the law of the father. And these polarities must be internally harmonized so that we can relate harmoniously to all beings regardless of their distribution of yin and yang and their self-presentation (leading either with

yang or with yin)—so that there is a capacity to respond in complementarity rather than in opposition.

And then finally, the **duality of death and glory (immortality)**. (Here I wrote “glory” because we've been using that signifier, but meaning immortality—the eternal deathless Self.) We must live in conscious awareness of the mortality of the form and the non-mortality of the consciousness that is directing that form. We must recognize that the mortal is the manifestation of the immortal. Although it will be shed at the death of the body, it remains as an internal aspect of the evolution of consciousness of the soul vehicle through all of its permutations through time. Each vehicle has particular forms of wisdom that have been accumulated through experience. By not rejecting or separating that wisdom but letting go of the husk of its form, we keep the essence of that which the body signified as a vehicle of our fulfillment.

Therefore, there's no rejection; there's no duality between the consciousness and the form. But the mental chatter that produced an interference pattern that prevented the full embodiment of the Real Self is eliminated, which is what allows the overcoming of that duality. There is no body; it is only a manifestation of a dream field that is produced by the creative intelligence of the Self and is not different from that. If one can recognize the presence of unresolved polarities within one's consciousness, and one's attachment to one or another of those that keeps one from harmonizing and then letting go and moving into more complete levels of nonduality, then one is able to be in that state of freedom that we yearn for.

Now I want to shift into speaking more directly about these two principal concepts of our duality that, in a way, include and transcend and epitomize all the other dualities—that is, the duality between **Being and becoming**. Historically, the relationship of Being and becoming that we have learned in culture has morphed in very extreme ways. So, first, I want to talk about the seven historic shifts in the relationship of being and becoming.

In the classical period (actually, it's expressed by this Shiva Nataraj probably better than anything I could draw), Shiva is our Being, and the dwarf is our becoming. But the only becoming that is really possible to the dwarf is to awaken to its Being, because it has no reality of its own. It's an illusion that is a manifestation of the potentialities of Being. Only when it's battered enough by its karma will it awaken to its Being.

So this is the classical view: all that is Real is our Being. That Being has infinite power and infinite potency of every sort, and it is deathless; while our becoming is just a midget version of that Reality and has no essential Being of its own. So, if we draw that this way, then Being is that, and becoming is a very small part of what we are. The same was true in ancient Greece and all of the ancient world.

But through time, although it got top billing, Being was nonetheless losing its authority. So life became an equal genuflection to Being and becoming. Then eventually (we could say at the beginning of the modern period) Descartes and Kant said, “You can't know your Being. All you know is your becoming. Your Being is theoretical, because the *ding an sich* (the thing in itself, the Real) is knowable only through faith, not through perception.” So there's still a transcendental Being, but it's now more theory and tradition than anything that has significance.

Then, with Descartes, what we see is a complete shift. Being is virtually eliminated, and what you have instead is mind and body—a horizontal bifurcation of mind and body. Descartes said, “I think, therefore I am.” So my Being is my thinking now; whereas, in the past, thinking was recognized as part of becoming. Thinking is changing; it's not a state of changeless Being. So Being is completely eliminated from the philosophical horizon, leaving only mind and body.

Then that morphs in the later modern period, when body becomes so powerful that mind is considered an epiphenomenon. We even find in our early 20th-century philosophers (especially those in the U.K. and the U.S., like Gilbert Ryle), there are those who say, “Consciousness is an illusion. It doesn't even really exist.” There's only neurological activity, and it creates an illusion of consciousness to the point where AI is now said to have more sentience than the human has.

Then it morphs further to the point where mind is completely treated as if it is body. So, in other words, if we have a mental disorder, psychiatrists give us a chemical. They give us a pill, and the mind is translated into chemical terms. That's all it is—it's chemistry. Mind itself has now become a part of body, until all that's left is body becoming in its grossest form.

OK? So those were the seven shifts from (let's say) the historic mode of understanding that relationship between Being and becoming up to the modern or postmodern period, in which there is only becoming. And most of us take that for granted in the educational system—we assume that life is only about our bodies in action in the world in a state of becoming.

Being (or God, if you will, who represents the Supreme Being—the Being of the world, the Foundation of Reality) has become something that is, in mainstream science, completely *vorboten*. We are not allowed to include even the possibility of an intelligent designer of the universe. Everything has to be random-chance mutation. And if you go to any mainstream university to study psychology, for example, you'll study evolutionary psychology or evolutionary biology or some other form of becoming which is not based on Being. It's all simply based on a random chance that never has a foundation or a justification, in the same way that there's no intention even to answer the question, “Well, how did the Big Bang go off in the first place? Who put the singularity there to explode into space and time and matter and energy?” No, you don't go there; that's taboo. So Being is not allowed within the discourse of the postmodern period—it's off the radar screen. If you speak about it, you're no longer speaking rationally; you're speaking from some religious belief system.

Unfortunately, this has taken over the world in a totally globalized way. Even though there are cultures that are still nominally religious, they are all within a larger paradigm in which engineering is much more important to the success of the nation-state than metaphysics, or the production of sages, or wisdom and the power of consciousness to heal and transform and redream reality. No, that's pretty much eliminated from consideration as having any reality.

None of this is new to us, of course. But then the question is, “How do we deal with this? What shifts in our current relationship between Being and becoming would happen when we enter into a path like Sat Yoga (of gyana, bhakti, and raja yoga—the meditative practice as an integrated whole)?” We start out believing only in our becoming. We're all in the *anavopaya* mode,

believing we are beings in a world and limited to our bodies (skin-encapsulated egos, as they say), and all that is real is the external world . . . the rest is fantasy and illusion . . . and the hard thinkers who are able to think clearly are only the scientists, while the softies go into the humanities or into some field of art or basket-weaving but don't study what's real—which is basically how to reengineer the world with the use of high technology, etc.

As we begin to meditate though, certain imperiences happen. Our becoming begins to have intimations of immortality, as Wordsworth put it in a poem once. There is some glimpse that there is something within us—an inner light, or a sense of peace, or a sense of serenity that comes from love of God or worship of some kind, or a sense of devotion to that which is beyond our becoming.

So Being begins to appear as a vague, ghostly part of our reality. And as we attain higher meditative states, then the becoming and the Being end up separate but in a relationship. We can return to those states in which the mind is quiet and we're able to download inspirations. There's a sense of peace within, and even a sense of memories of previous lifetimes, or memories and experiences out of body, or visions and various other paranormal experiences and imperiences that strengthen our connection to Being . . . until, eventually, there's a natural connection in which the two modes are always in contact, whether we're in sitting meditation or we're active. There's a constancy of recognition that we are in a state of becoming and simultaneously in a state of Being. They're in contact, but they're not yet unified.

Then a state is reached where they are actually beginning to integrate and there is a region of consciousness in which nondual perception appears. There are moments of recognition when time stops, and there's a sense of eternity being present in the moment. There's a sense of the presence of God or of Divine Energy and Light and Power moving us, and that we are not different from it. It's not constant, and we can move in and out of it. Then sometimes we'll be totally in perhaps a samadhi state or a state of Beingness, but it won't remain constant.

But then we reach the state where things reverse, and becoming is recognized as appearing within our Being. We move into a state where the Being is primary and the becoming is like a dream that is happening. And then, at some point, the boundaries shift and Being and becoming are one. We could say there's a unity of both Being and becoming. And this would be when we are entering into *mahasukha* and total nonduality. But there's one state after that where even that state of unified Being and becoming appears within a larger horizon of an inconceivable intelligence that cannot be located as either Being or not-being, as either manifest or unmanifest—a total, absolute Self that is literally beyond the reach of our consciousness to know, but that we recognize as what we are and that from which our Being itself has arisen.

So that, I think, is the general pathway of spiritual development. We go through these different phases in which there is more or less faith in the power of Being to bring a new order into the path of becoming and ultimately to redream the world of becoming on the basis of that Absolute Intelligence. That is what Plato called the Good—the absolute One that is the source of all that manifests and that is responsible for the blessing of creation and the equally benevolent blessing of destruction (the end of a world of suffering and the birth of a new world of beauty free of

suffering). We are now at that point of choosing death and rebirth at an individual level at the same time as it's happening at the cosmic level.

OK, how many people think all of this makes sense? Yeah? OK. You're as crazy as I am. That's good. And you're willing to let go of the collective paradigm, which is very difficult for many people to do. It's like that Copernican revolution where the earth is not the center—the ego is no longer the center of reality. The ego is that attempted fixed identity that is always in a state of becoming but whose becoming is a state of degradation, of erosion, of entropy, of falling into chaos—not of higher order.

The shifting out of egocentricity into (let's say) holocentricity or theocentricity enables a restoration of a harmonious consciousness that is in sync with the becoming of the world as a manifestation of that Supreme Being. Therefore, we can live without fear of death or of whatever is our karmic destiny—without paranoia, or distrust, or the need for ego defenses. And we can be in that state of vulnerability and innocence because Reality (Being Itself) is goodness, benevolence, perfection. Therefore, we can let go of any barriers to the Infinite.

To me, that's the pathway whereby our consciousness reaches the point where we can open to the Infinite and be absorbed into It without losing the polarity of our individual becoming as unique manifestations of an archetypal image of that Infinite Intelligence. Because the intelligence of the One Self is infinite, it has an infinite number of archetypal images that are needed to express its totality. So every being is a unique manifestation. But though we are all unique and different, it is difference and uniqueness that makes us all the same because we share that trait of uniqueness. Therefore, there's no need for envy or competition or any kind of conflict. We can appreciate the uniqueness of the manifestation of every being and its importance within the superorganismic functioning of the whole without having any sense of either not belonging or wanting to be more at the center. As Aquinas said, the center is everywhere and the periphery (the circumference), nowhere. Each of us is the center of Being itself, the Zero Point, and we are also the periphery. We are the ultimate manifestation, in Chronos time, of its becoming, and those two are not different.

That leads to wholeness and completeness, as well as a respect and honoring of the divine wholeness and completeness of every being without prejudice or negative projection. Even the most villainous characters in the play, according to some conventional frame of reference, have a function in the same way that the bacteria that eat decomposing bodies have a function in the environment. Compost is necessary for the growth of a new generation of flowers. All of those elements that we consider shadow elements of Reality are as important as the Light and have their place and their use in the ecosystem of Reality. So we can be in the world without judgment or any feeling of being out of sync with unfolding processes.

Namaste,

Shunyamurti