

Anthony on Awareness, Being Awareness, I Am

Meditate on I Am (Looking Into Mind)

AD: Now how do I get to prove in my own experience, that I AM, alright, that the I AM or the greater consciousness includes within itself the whole world-idea? I've got to do meditation in order to get the experimental proof that this is so. The other way is still theory; until you can experience the Witness-I yourself, until you can actually experience that your consciousness includes everything, until you can actually experience the transformation of your being into thought, this is all theory. So on the one hand, mentalism is like the theoretical side, and meditation is the practical side. The two of them together will put your feet on the ground, from then on the infinite journey begins.

So the first thing is we have to try to theoretically to understand something about mentalism. And that's difficult. And then the next thing is, if you have some understanding of mentalism, then you want to be able to realize a little bit of it.

When a person tries to understand mentalism and he has to think very deeply and profoundly over and over again, and then he tries to realize it in meditation and he gets a glimpse. Now he's on his way.

Its Not Far Away (Looking Into Mind)

PB: "Reason tells us that pure Thought cannot know itself because that would set up a duality which would be false if pure Thought is the only real existence. But this is only reason's inability to measure what transcends itself. Although all ordinary experience confirms it, extraordinary experience refutes it." (28:2.132 and p. 385)

AD: You know it's not something far away from you. It's not out there. It's like I said, when you close your eyes and you look within and you see this blankness. Ask yourself the question, "Who sees this blankness?" Try to understand the who who sees.

Never mind what it sees. Just concentrate on who sees. And after a while there develops the looking sensation, that you're just looking. And then after a while that drops away. The sensation of looking drops away and there's just looking. Then you begin to feel that you aren't anything at all, but just this infinite consciousness, no limits to it. But it's right there when you close your eyes. You say, "Look I see all these thoughts running around." Never mind the thoughts. Who sees the thoughts. "Oh, I'm disturbed today." Never mind the disturbance, who sees the disturbance? Always go back to the who. It's that point of light within you that you got to go into and follow it through all the way. And that's the void that he's speaking about. Because that seer is consciousness.

But you will see, you'll think about consciousness and you're off the point. Because to think about consciousness is to put you outside of consciousness. So all you can do is to be attentive to that seeing. Never mind anything else. Who's looking, who sees this blackness in front of me? It's horrible. I keep looking, I keep hoping to find myself, but all I see is this blackness, this darkness. And you got to try to remember. Go back to who sees it and stay with that. Don't let the contents usurp your attention.

S: This is not what you would call the Witness, this is beyond that.

AD: You go through the Witness-position too. The important point here is to try to understand by being that awareness. That's the only way that it could be understood, by being that awareness.

S: Is there any experiences which could be like that experience, which is not that experience.

AD: You could imagine, if this is what you mean, you could imagine that you're having the experience. But whenever you imagine anything, it won't give you the feeling of being infinite awareness, boundless, uncircumscribed, empty of everything...

Deepening Consciousness (discussion and audio 1/27/84)

AD: if you wanted to investigate the nature of consciousness, could you do it by reading books about it? Yes, to some extent, a little bit. But if you really want to investigate the nature of consciousness, what would you have to do?

S: Be it.

AD: Be it, right? And then investigate deeper into it, so an enquiry into the nature of the self - sure, it starts off with reading, getting acquainted with some ideas, you even think you know what your teacher is telling you, right? Then the next point is a little harder. In meditational practices you succeed in isolating what this I-ness is (what) this consciousness is in you. You're identified with this consciousness. You're no longer identified with the psychosomatic, You're no longer dwelling in memories, anticipations, reflections ...that's all gone. You're in this state of consciousness, you are this consciousness. You are this awareness. Now you can start your investigation into consciousness.

DR: I really don't have a grasp of what that means, what is that further investigation?

AD: Do you remember when PB in the notes said that this state of becoming aware of awareness, you remember there's a further state of being just this awareness? Isn't that consciousness or that awareness deepening?

DR: Is that a deepening or is that a discovery of awareness-do you see any difference at all between the discovery (of soul) and that further investigation? When you say that the discovery of pure awareness, are you saying that is the investigation into soul?)

AD: The discovery of awareness - like you're meditating and you realize yourself to be consciousness, is this the discovery of the soul? Yes. Is it also possible to consider that this discovery may simply be at the fringes, that you're at the outermost, that you've only touched on the surface, that there are depths within it that are treacherous? Is that possible? DR: Yes

AD: Yes. That's all I'm saying,

DR: So you're saying it's that very continuing and striving for that awareness that is what's constituting this investigation--)

AD: Yes, that is the true investigation. (long pause) When the sage for instance, discovers the soul, recognizes he is consciousness that same sage goes on and discovers that there is what we refer to as the Absolute soul, and that sage continuing further discovers the Intellectual Principle, and investigating and deepening further his consciousness, achieves unity or the supreme Identity, aren't these all stages within consciousness -- the deepening and inwardization of consciousness? What else could it be? If we think of a sage quietly sitting down and meditating, he's lost awareness of the body, he is this consciousness; now he investigates further - what is this consciousness? And he finds that it is a thought within the World Mind; he's discovering that it's a point within the World Mind, that it can be deepened and now he becomes aware of a greater principle; and he can go in deeper and he can become aware, as Plotinus points out, of the supreme identity. These are steps of inwardization of his consciousness. I'm not saying that he can permanently stay there, but he knows that this can happen.

AD: *The I Am: Center of Being and Just Being:* [1984/02/15 : excerpts of transcript used in Living Wisdom]

PB: ``Whenever I have used the term `the centre of his being,' I have referred to a state of meditation, to an experience which is felt at a certain stage. Because the very art of meditation is a drawing inwards and the finer, the more delicate, the subtler this indrawing becomes, the closer it is to this central point of consciousness. But from the point of view of philosophy, meditation and its experiences are not the ultimate goal--although they may help in preparing one for that goal. In that goal there is no kind of centre to be felt nor any circumference either--one is without being localized anywhere with reference to the body, one is both in the body and the Overself. There is then no contradiction between the two." 20.4.136

AD: When we sit to meditate and the person succeeds in intensifying his attention, it seems as though his concentration is like going through his center. You could think of all the radii of a circle converging to a point. And he says this is the experience that comes from meditation. I would say that basically there what's happening is that the attention is being restricted or contracted to that point that we refer to as that part of the soul which has been projected; in other words, the re-embodiment soul. That's one type of experience. There's another type of experience which goes further than that and that takes you to the experience of your I AM, which is beyond it.

So we could say something like this: that when you constrict your attention to a point, and you experience the re-embodiment soul, it's like a mystical experience, and we could call that consciousness just for the sake of discussion. And then there's something beyond that which we could call the Mind, the individual I AM. And if one goes beyond that and reaches that individual I AM, there is no reference to any center. One doesn't experience the gathering of all his forces and plunging to a central point in his being. That's not the experience of the I AM. The I AM is an experience which is quite different.

Now the combination of these two--the experience of one's center of being and the experience of one as just being--is what Plotinus referred to as the ``we." And that's the philosophic experience: the experience of the I AM which includes that part of the I AM, that power that the I AM has to project forth. So when we say that the I AM projects forth a part of itself or a power from itself, and this is the consciousness which gets embodied; that's one experience. The experience of the I AM, independent of that, is another. The two of them together is the experience of the soul as the ``we" which contains both of them, and that's the philosophic experience.

S: Is the philosophic experience another state of meditation?

AD: That's more than meditation: That's meditation and philosophic understanding.

S: That's the state of a sage?

AD: Yes.

S: When you said that there's both the I AM alone and the I AM that projects forth the world . . .

AD: The Witness-I, if you want to use that term. The I AM, pure Mind, the individual unit Mind, projects forth from itself the Witness-I. Now, the experience in meditation takes you into the

center of your being; that's the Witness-I. The experience of what's beyond it is the I AM. The two of them together is the ``we." The experience of the ``we" is the philosophic understanding of both, in the sense that on the one hand you could think of yourself as this body, and on the other hand, you could think of yourself as egoless being.

S: So that would be the state he refers to when he says the attention is to the temporal moment in the foreground and the permanent ``I" in the background.

AD: Yes, you could use that. I had to bring in the way Plotinus discusses this; maybe that would clear up what he means when he says, ``And the `we'? What are `we'?" Because that's a very difficult phrase in Plotinus, to understand what is the nature of the ``we": the I AM and the Witness-I, that has the experience of the world and the World Idea; the I AM doesn't. The two of them together give you the full understanding. The Overself refers to the last part of the sentence.

***PB:** `` . . . In that goal there is no kind of centre to be felt nor any circumference either--one is without being localized anywhere with reference to the body . . . and the Overself. There is then no contradiction between the two." (repeat)*

AD: For the sage there's the simultaneous function of being the Witness-I and of also being that undifferentiated consciousness.

S: So he doesn't have anything to do with the World Idea.

AD: Per se, but you have to hold the two of them together to grasp what he's talking about, that the sage operates in this way: The two of them are together, the functioning of the Witness-I which can only be in relation to the World Idea and the I AM which is not.

S: Is this a description of insight?

AD: No, this is more like an attempt to understand the way he speaks about philosophic understanding, that it has to include both. Philosophic understanding is understanding of the functioning of insight that the sage operates with, and also the understanding of the Witness-I and its role in the world. It is a way of speaking about the soul as being the double knower, containing intrinsic self-cognition and also discursive reasoning and sense perception. It is the Witness-I which has the experience of the World Idea.

S: But it's not that the I AM experience DENIES the World Idea?

AD: No, I wouldn't say that. He just said that the soul, in order to have the experience of a world, must project forth from itself a power, which he referred to as its projective power or the embodying soul. It is that which has the experience of the world.

Now, in order for you to get to the center of your being, to use his term, one sits down and meditates and draws his consciousness within; inwardizes it and deepens it, and it is in the very nature of the mystical experience to be a passing thing. It passes, and the World Idea resumes and comes back. And it will keep coming back, and you can't stop it from coming back as long as you consider yourself to be the Witness-I and identified with that. So it's paradoxical, but that's a statement of the truth, even for Plotinus. But the experience of the I AM shows it to be an egoless being, a being that, so to speak, is, and could be, without reference to an ego. And it is

the combination of these two which will give us a true philosophic perspective and understanding. They're not contradictory; they may be paradoxical.

S: I thought you were taking the mystic path as what he finally gets to as his Witness.

AD: Yes. The mystic has to go further, but most of them stop there. That's why their efforts are frustrated, because you can have a glimpse for an hour, a day, a month. I knew someone to have it for six months, but it went. And then he was forced to recognize that the world was part of that functioning. Again and again PB points out that the only way to really transcend the World Idea is by absorbing it, and you absorb it through philosophic understanding.

But philosophic understanding requires that you understand the soul in this peculiar way: that it is egoless being, and, on the other hand, this egoless being can restrict itself and employ one of its powers to have experience of a world. If you remember all those passages in Plotinus about the "we," if you read them in the light of what I've just said, you'll see that they will clear up automatically.

[note: not read in class: Although the aspirant has now awakened to his witness-self, found his "soul," and thus lifted himself far above the mass of mankind, he has not yet accomplished the full task set him by life. A further effort still awaits his hand. He has yet to realize that the witness-self is only a *part* of the All-self. So his next task is to discover that he is not merely the witness of the rest of existence but essentially of one stuff with it. He has, in short, by further meditations to realize his oneness with the entire universe in its real being. He must now meditate on his witness-self as being in its essence the infinite All. Thus the ultramystic exercises are graded into two stages, the second being more advanced than the first. The banishment of thoughts reveals the inner self whereas the reinstatement of thoughts without losing the newly gained consciousness reveals the All-inclusive universal self. The second feat is the harder. 23.6.88]

Pure Consciousness [1984/02/15 : excerpts of transcript used in Living Wisdom]

PB: "Where we speak either metaphysically or meditatively of the experience of pure consciousness, we mean consciousness uncoloured by the ego." 20.4.188

S: Does pure consciousness mean the same thing as the one life?

AD: I don't think so. I think the thrust is in another direction now.

If I were to speak to you and say that this person had such and such an experience where he managed to dismiss all thought of every kind and experience himself as consciousness, that would be a kind of self-recognition--he's saying, well, you're coming from the point of view of actual meditational experience. Now, let's forget the mystic and say I just explained this to you. I'm coming from the point of view of metaphysics.

This is just a story, a fairy tale: I've just come out of a deep meditation, and I experienced myself to be pure consciousness. I had dismissed all thought, and in the dismissal of all thought what

remains is this immaterial, unobjectifiable consciousness that I am. And I talk to you and tell you about it. Now, I'm coming to you from a direct experience of it, and I'm explaining to you, or trying to explain to you, and you would say, "Well, you got that from meditation." Now another person comes along and repeats identically what I have said, but he hasn't had the experience, but he knows theoretically about what it should be all about. He's coming from a metaphysical point of view. In other words, he's coming from the point of view of a theoretical understanding, and the other person is coming from a practical experience of what it should be like. But they should both be accurate in the sense that this is what you really are like, this pure consciousness.

S: Could that pure consciousness refer to either of the two?

AD: No, it generally refers to your Witness-I. Remember the sentence where PB says there's awareness of awareness, and then there's pure awareness? When you have the experience of the Witness-I, you won't be able to distinguish that it's an awareness of awareness. At the time that you're having it you're going to think that it's just pure consciousness. It's going to take the experience of the I AM to recognize that it wasn't that pure; it was an awareness of awareness. It's only when you're in the I AM that you are just the awareness.

One is basically coming from the point of view of the practitioner; the other is coming from the point of view of the theoretician. You remember the Buddha pointed out that the combination of these two is ideal: the man who understands this and the man who experiences it.

COLUMBUS MARCH 1984 *** the centre of his being

PB: "If he has succeeded in holding his mind somewhat still and empty, his next step is to find his centre." (23.8.6 & Persp. p. 340)

AD: There is no center. The center here means that he finds himself to be an infinite and egoless being. That is his center. In other words, when you meditate and penetrate and realize yourself in the heart, if you go one more step beyond that, then you aren't anywhere. You can't locate yourself. That's your center. That's your true center. But if you think that you are this body, and you say my center is here, then that's not it. One's real center is a state where there is no reference to any center. That's what you really are like. How could the mind have a center anywhere? Is it some kind of a thing?

In another quote he used that, he spoke about the circumference and the center.

[SEE PREVIOUS: 20.4.136 16.2.255 also see 4.4.29]

From the point of view of yoga practice, the yogi gradually succeeds in bringing his field of awareness to a single centre, which is at first located in the head and later in the heart. This achievement is so unusual that he experiences great peace and exaltation as a result-- something utterly different from his normal condition. For him this is the soul, the kingdom of heaven, the Overself. But from the point of view of the philosophy of Truth, any physical

localization of the Overself is impossible, because space itself is entirely within the mind, and the mind is therefore beyond any limits of here and there, and the Overself and Pure Mind (unindividualized) holds all bodies within it without being touched by them. 16.2.255

Sometimes he'll use a paradoxical statement to get you to wake up to what he's saying. It's an experience that's also--this experience of the center--we could state it in another way: When THERE IS NO CENTER in the brain, in other words, there's no observer there who refers to himself as a referent, in other words, when your brain has no one to refer to, then you experience a state of being without any referent. As long as the brain is busy, it keeps saying ``me, me, me." It refers everything to itself. You speak of a center. Take away that center, take away that referent to itself all the time, and you get this feeling of an impersonal being that you are, this egoless being that you are. Let that referent come back in and you'll see that everything gets centered again in this dualistic way. But as long as you're referring to yourself as the center, you're going to have the opposite, the non-center. As long as you refer to this as the ``I am" or the ``me", there's the ``not-me" out there. I'm sure he has other quotes like that, which would clarify what he means by center.

AD COMMENTS from class 1984 0113 (Audio g).

AH: Anthony, [AD: yes--] a question of clarification concerning a phrase in this last paper, he described the necessity to isolate this principle--but then also it has been described, that which is absolutely nonobjectifiable, and that kind of language. So what is meant by isolating? Are we speaking of what Soul is not?

AD: Well, what I'm simply saying there-- it's really nothing profound-- I'm simply saying that when you sit down and you meditate you attempt to isolate your I-ness, from the psychosomatic organism. In other words that immaterial principle, that illuminating consciousness, you try to isolate that from your body, the psychosomatic organism. Now let's say that it was possible that you could isolate this awareness, which is always identified with the body, alright, you isolate the awareness from the psychosomatic organism, and you have identified with this awareness, alright, now you recognize that there's an I-- "I'm this awareness," alright. Now you can begin an inquiry, an investigation into the nature of the 'I'. You cannot investigate into the nature of the 'I' when you're identified with the bodily organism, and while you think you are the bodily organism. So it's an investigation that's very strange, because the only equipment you're going to have, alright, is to be denuded of everything.

AH: That's my question, I don't know what it means to isolate or to investigate if you've already precluded the possibility of everything that I know ... Everything that I could possibly know about in a conceptual way...

AD: No, everything that you could possibly know, the way you are now-- (AH: yes) Yes. (AH: it has to be--) -- precluded, yes.

AH: So what does it mean to investigate and isolate, can you say more, is it possible to say...?

AD: No, well this is the purpose of the meditational exercises. I mean when you sit down and you practice attention, until you become attention, and nothing but attention, and you recognize that this attention is a power of the Soul, and you trace this power of the Soul to its source, alright, you can't bring any baggage with you. You can't bring any thoughts with you, you're not going to be able to investigate the nature of the 'I' with some more thoughts. You can only investigate the nature of the 'I'-- let's say-- let's say that this 'I-ness' has depths to it, you can only investigate it by YOU doing it. By YOU becoming

what it is you're investigating. You can't have a series of thoughts about what's going on there, that would be no investigation at all.

AH: I can't ..

RG: He said you can't understand it--..

AH: I feel a little better if it can't be understood. (S3: hah!) (inaudible) I'm sorry, I don't understand, Anthony.

AD: Well it is true, like it was pointed out, to strip consciousness of all thought, and (of) all content, to recognize that you are this consciousness, alright, that is inconceivable, because in the very statement, "strip it of all thought," you've made it inconceivable, alright. Now that you are this inconceivable awareness, and further introspect into yourself, alright, where there are no thoughts, no concepts that you could bring along like a pair of claws so that you could grab what's going on, yes-- it's admittedly true. But that's why I say, in the paper, that we have to follow the lead of those who have done that, who have investigated or introspected into their I-ness, through and by means of that awareness, or that I-ness, and not with anything extraneous to that I-ness. I know it's admittedly difficult to understand. I know that. And that's precisely why I'm pointing out, it doesn't help that you studied all the Greek texts, and you know the etymological derivation of all the Greek words, it will be utterly hopeless here to bring it along with you all this paraphernalia and try to investigate the nature of this awareness. It's only awareness, so to speak, introspecting into itself that can know about itself, by being itself, and the deepening phases of this here-- But I can't bring no concepts in. And so, most of the time they give it these descriptive names, the Clear Light, the Brighter Light, the Void Light, the Ultimate Light, you know, and these are not meant to be concepts.

PB Notes to go with above discussion: Awareness of Awareness

The true state of meditation is reached when there is awareness of awareness, without the intrusion of any thoughts whatever. But this condition is not the ultimate. Beyond it lies the stage where all awareness vanishes *without the total loss of consciousness that this normally brings*. 4.1.128

To be the witness is the first stage; to be Witness of the witness is the next; but to BE is the final one. For consciousness lets go of the witness in the end. Consciousness alone is itself the real experience. 25.2.100

Mentalism is the study of Mind and its product, thoughts. To separate the two, to disentangle them, is to become aware of Awareness itself. This achievement comes not by any process of intellectual activity but by the very opposite--suspending such activity. And it comes not as another idea but as extremely vivid, powerfully compelling insight. 28.2.119