

# ONENESS



THE DESTINATION YOU NEVER LEFT

JOHN GREVEN



# **Oneness: The Destination You Never Left**

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John Greven

Non-Duality Press

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You are what you seek.

There is nothing to attain.

What is obvious, but perhaps overlooked, is by far more than you have—or can imagine.

**The message is simple.**

So, if only for a brief time,  
consider dropping your expectations of what enlightenment or self-realization is.

What does not change is real.

What changes is only appearance.

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Foreword by “Sailor” Bob Adamson

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## Foreword

~~This is a beautiful book. It is very simple, direct and to the point. It will be a benefit to many people.~~

I am very pleased that the message, which Nisargadatta Maharaj was a vehicle for, is being passed on. This lineage is influencing many and the message is continuing to spread throughout the world.

It is obvious that the author has investigated along the lines he points to in this book. He has dispersed the clouds of conceptual beliefs with basic clear seeing. This book, itself, is the proof that he knows whereof he speaks.

The book takes the seeker locked in the confusion of the mind to the immediacy of the Natural State.

Don't under-rate the obviousness and simplicity contained in this book and the search is over!

*"Sailor" Bob Adamson Melbourne, 2005*

# Introduction to Nowhere

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“Hello darkness, my old friend,  
I’ve come to talk with you again,  
Because a vision softly creeping,  
Left its seeds while I was sleeping,  
And the vision that was planted in my brain  
Still remains  
Within the sound of silence.”

*From The Sound of Silence—Paul Simon—1964*

The word nowhere is complete as it is. Nothing needs to be added or taken away for it to be what it is. It is just a word. There may be an image in your mind about what nowhere means or what it is. But there is something that the mind may have overlooked when reading the word nowhere. It is as simple as noticing the space—and suddenly the landscape changes...“no where” becomes “now here.” The same letters in the same order, only the meaning has changed since the space was noticed.

The simple and obvious is frequently overlooked or taken for granted by the mind. You look at a page and see the words, but not the space between them. You watch a movie or television program without noticing the light changing to form the images. You mentally talk to yourself and assume that someone is listening. The mind is trained to focus on content. While reading this paragraph, the mind sorts, labels, and tosses out what it does not consider valuable. Perhaps the mind is looking for something within these words. Perhaps there is an expectation to be fulfilled. Yet, if someone were to go back and point something out in the paragraph, it is possible that you would see something that was there all the time, but was just overlooked. Perhaps the answer is right in front of us all the time.

The intent of this book is to point to something that the mind may have overlooked. It is not pointing to anything new, anything that you can achieve, or anything you can add to yourself. It is not pointing to the good deeds you have done in your life to emphasize what a wonderful person you must be. It is pointing to something so simple, something so obvious, that when it is pointed out and seen, you wonder how it was ever missed. How is it that the mind could have taken something so obvious for granted? How did the mind so easily toss out the valuable jewel in favor of its reflections?

You may have been searching for self-realization, enlightenment, the Buddha Mind, God, or some other goal implying the same thing. You may have been searching for many years; or you may just be getting started on a search. Whether you have been travelling a path for a while, or just taking the first step, makes no difference. This book invites you to take a look at the space that has been overlooked to see what is obvious, and to bring that search to an end... right now.

If you have been traveling a path for a while you may believe that with more practice, meditation, visualization, improvement, or study, you will get to the top of the mountain. But paths, practices, and exercises do not lead to the top of the mountain. What you may see is that the mountain itself, and the paths that traverse it, lead only to themselves. You may convince yourself while traveling along a path, that you are gaining spiritual growth, peace, happiness, love, or other valuable attributes. But that is not really the truth of your experience? Are you any closer to self-realization than you were the day you started the search? The fact is, if the search is still going on, the answer is no—you are no closer. But that is nothing to worry about, because nothing has been lost—just as nothing will be gained. This book will not help you along any path. It is about noticing that space in the word “no where” and

seeing that it is really “now here.” This book is about removing the person from the path entirely. End Game.

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This book will offer no path, no exercises, no teacher, no guru, no mantra, nothing! It is not about selfimprovement, spiritual growth, or hocus-pocus. There are plenty of other sources for those types of improvement, and a lifetime is not long enough to explore them all in any detail. You may have chosen a path that fits your particular temperament, and I am not by any means discounting methods, but that is not what we are talking about here. This is about a totally radical discovery. It is about seeing who you are, who you have always been, and who you will always be. What you are is not hiding. It is not on some other level of consciousness. It is *nowhere*!

## Who Do You Think You Are?

The most logical place to start in the discovery of who you are is to begin examining some *assumptions* about who you think you are, how those ideas came about, and whether or not they are true. This will not only be painless and effortless, there is a good chance that your mind will find it entertaining. It makes no sense that self-realization should be work, that a certain IQ would be required to know who and what you are, or that the mind's discovery of the self is reserved for those who sit in a cave or devote their entire lives to the search. Now, there is certainly a lot that can be learned, but for what we are talking about here, only basic understanding is necessary to get past some of the mind's expectations and assumptions.

The body, that you call yours, was born dependent for its very survival. Immediately there were needs to be satisfied. But did the person you take yourself to be now, exist then? At the birth of what you think is you there was just a body with needs, a brain with basic survival instinct, and something present and aware. There were no ideas about what was happening or should be happening, but things continued to happen and develop without you. Choices to be hungry, to cry, and to sleep were not made but just spontaneously arose as the body required.

Immediately, the brain began to accumulate information and experience from the senses. There was basic programming, of course, to become human, just as a tree has programming to become a tree. So the human grew like other humans, just as a tree grows like other trees. *You* never made a choice to grow; growing just happened according to the design that has continued to evolve or change since the first cause.

If you watch a baby trying new foods there is a reaction of like or dislike. It is a subjective experience of how the body/brain interprets the taste. Again, there was not a choice to like or dislike nor was there an expectation of liking or disliking, it just happened as a result of the interpretation of the taste. There was no information on which to base this like or dislike—you didn't know it was spinach and that it was green! There was just a reaction to it and the brain stored the information for future reference.

If the reaction was dislike, the brain/mind may now avoid spinach or perhaps it avoids green foods. Either way, a world is being subjectively defined in the mind. Preferences become known and choices began to surface. Clearly these preferences or choices are based on information gathered through the senses of the body, the brain's interpretation of them, and thoughts as they begin to arise about experiences. We can't even say that there is a right way or wrong way for this to happen. It happens for each organism according to the programming (DNA) and environment that has led to the very existence of this particular body/mind.

As things are interpreted or labeled by the mind they slowly cease to be what they are and start to become what is thought about them. Spinach becomes a good or bad thing *without anyone choosing to like or dislike it*.

Perhaps during what we refer to as the terrible two's, these preferences began to have a new reference point, a reference point that did not exist previously. The brain/mind had continued to carry out its function and with the collective information it began to form an idea about who you are. There began to surface in the brain/ mind the idea that experiences were happening to you. There arose the idea that you tasted food and that you liked or disliked different foods. Without choosing it, the notion occurred that this reference point in the mind is you. Perhaps the idea, at this point, is just that you are this body, but the idea of *you* as a person is forming in the brain/mind. Where before there was just



like or dislike, now there is an apparent *you* that likes or dislikes. Before, choices arose spontaneously but now it *appears* that *you* are making choices based on those likes and dislikes. Once, hunger was present—now it appears that *you* are hungry. But, is that really what is happening? *Is that reference point of “you” valid?* It certainly seems so, but by what gauge is that reality judged? Isn't the validity of the idea of a person validated by the same mind that assumes it to be valid? Think about it—the mind contains the thought “I Am”—the mind then confirms that the thought is a real thing. But without the thought, would you still be?

Again, while you did not choose to do it, growing continued as designed. The same sorting out that allowed the liking and disliking of spinach was applied to things around you and to yourself. The thought of who you are continues to evolve over a lifetime. There appears to be a world that you, as a separate being, move and exist in. You do what you can to survive and thrive, to get what you like, and avoid what you dislike; all based on subjective experience. In this world there are others that appear to be doing the same thing. You agree with others over what is right and wrong, over likes and dislikes, or you disagree with them. But based on what? Based on thoughts. It would seem that reality has moved into the mental realm and *reality is known by what is thought about it—not by what it is.*

There is a saying that the mind makes an excellent servant but a poor master. At this point, the mind has seemingly become the master. It has a base idea of the world, what it likes and dislikes, and is devoted to the task of becoming more and getting more, while avoiding what it does not like. It calls itself “I”, psychology calls it the ego.

As the person, which has evolved in the mind, you may be highly motivated to succeed in life, or your nature may be to just take things as they come. Either way, there is desire, hope, and needs to be filled, for and by this apparent person. Sometimes things go your way and sometimes they don't. When things go as expected or desired you feel happy and in control; when things go against what you believe or desire then there is suffering and pain.

You may continue to work and hope for a future that will be satisfying, or you may just give up depending on what has occurred and what was thought about it. You think that with adding more to yourself in the form of money, education, relationships, or health everything will be better. To the end, thinking, reasoning, and imagination are applied to solve what you *think* are problems. There is choosing between likes and dislikes to better the life for the person. This is, however, the same thinking that twisted *what is* into good and bad in the beginning, and began creating the mental realm in which you apparently now reside. What is has apparently become that which you think about. *What you are has apparently become what you think you are.* But is this just an unexamined assumption?

Life goes on with its apparent good times and bad times. One day you are on top of the world feeling that you have complete control over your life, whether you are conquering it or running from it. The very next day, or perhaps within a second, everything changes and suddenly you feel that you have no control and everything is falling apart. The mind comes to help with the same recommendation it has always offered. It tells you that you need more or less of something to be satisfied. If only (fill in the blank), I would be happy.

This is obviously a constant cycle, but a cycle that is continued because *it appears* to be the way things are and is never truly questioned. The mind hears about something it finds appealing, whether it is a person, place, or thing, and you need to have it or do it. Once acquired, there appears to be a moment's peace, and then you find out that there is something else that will make life better or more complete. Then that becomes the next obsession or goal that will fill the void. It may be a new car, a new job, a new relationship, or spiritual enlightenment. The mind is never satisfied as it tries in vain

to gain control and happiness for itself. But even when it appears that it has succeeded: just a slight change and everything falls apart. If the mind interprets an experience as really bad, the person may be devastated and plunged into a lifetime of intense pain and suffering as they are seemingly unable to release themselves from the bondage of thoughts.

There is one thing that is without question in the physical, emotional and mental world: things are not only going to change, they are changing every moment. Do you see the problem here? While the mind is looking to become something permanent and gain something permanent, the mind itself is a house built on the shifting sand. The mind itself is changing all the time. Sometimes even strongly held beliefs about reality change. A term has been coined to show a radical shift in the mind of what it thinks—paradigm shift.

Remember, what does not change is real. What changes is only appearance.

According to Webster's, a paradigm shift is *a fundamental change in approach or assumptions*. It is interesting that Webster's uses assumptions rather than facts. We live our lives trusting our mind to tell us how things are, but is it telling us the facts, or just assumptions based on input over years, and how it sees the world?

As life moves along, the mind continues to see things as it did spinach. There are things that it likes and things that it does not. Some of those things are about you. Those things that it does not like about you become inner turmoil. I am not good enough, I am not smart enough, I am not tall enough, or I am not thin enough. Perhaps, on the other hand, there is a sense of great self-worth and you feel in control of your life, successful, happy, a positive thinker, and on top of the world. All of these experiences are transient and subject to change without warning. They are not real because they can and will change. All of these thoughts equal suffering, all of them are purely in the mind, and all of them are a lie based on a misidentification or assumption that happened when you were about two.

But, we don't question the mind; we continue the same patterns as before. The person the mind has identified as "I" continues to redefine itself: "I am this, and I am that, and I am becoming..." The mind is always trying or wishing to be something that appears to be better than what it is.

In summary, there is a person or reference point of "me" or "I" in the mind that did not exist when you were born. Things are not seen for what they are, but as how the mind thinks about them. There is suffering because this person is at odds with and separate from what is. And now it appears, since you are reading this book, that this person is seeking the truth or self-realization—yet another thing to be added to the person?

## What You Think About Yourself is a Lie!

While the author does not pretend to know much about the teachings of the Tao, I would like to borrow for a moment to make a point.

What is Tao? In *Tao-te ching*, by Lao-tzu, Tao becomes the source from which all appearance derives, the unproduced producer of all that is, and the guarantor of its stability and regularity. *The Tao that can be known is not the true Tao.*

The Tao, as described above, is what you truly are. The message is that if it is known, then that is not it. The reason for this becomes clear when you come to understand a rather simple concept. *What you are is not a thing or object that the mind can grasp.* This is a major point that will become clear with the understanding of what is being pointed to ripens.

You may like terms such as soul or spirit to describe what you believe to be your true essence. We use them freely while referring to ourselves as having *that*, without knowing what *that* is. Perhaps there is a reason why the mind does not know what *that* is. Perhaps it is the Tao that *cannot* be known. Perhaps it is simply because the mind cannot know the source. If that is true, then perhaps it is also true that the mind is of no use for realizing your true nature.

In the meantime, the mind continues to do what it does. It assumes the job of answering the questions put to it, but based on nothing more than its own interpretation of itself and its way of viewing reality. So that mind tells you that you are human, male or female, healthy or unhealthy, good or bad, happy or unhappy, having needs and desires, and on it goes unsupervised and often unnoticed. An entire industry has been created to encourage positive thinking as a way to improve this *image of you* while encouraging the notion that you are what you think. While that is somewhat true for the person or ego, in all the mind's questions, answers, problems, and solutions there is one thing in common: it is all about objects, whether they be thoughts or things. Objects are all that the mind knows and will ever know. To repeat a simple concept, *what you are, is not a thing or object that the mind can grasp.*

When we take a closer look at what the mind is doing, we see that the mind is making choices between opposites to define who you are and to define literally everything else. If you happen to believe that you are a timeless spirit of some kind, are any of the mind's definitions about you accurate in describing that timeless entity? Is it a physical body? Are you an object of any kind? There is an obvious question here as well: do you think you have a soul, spirit, higher self or true essence? If you believe that you do, then I must ask just who you think "you" are that has *that* and why aren't you just *that*? Why is it something that "you" have and not something that "you" are? Why do you think that you are a person with these spiritual, mental and physical attributes? Is it just because that is what the mind has told you? Have you ever truly investigated its claims, beliefs, and assumptions? Can they be validated? Has the mind made a mistake in identity? Are you perhaps something outside of the limited mind? Are you the source, and as such, cannot be known by the appearance?

We believe that we are a person with these attributes, problems, and suffering because we, as the ego, believe what the mind is telling us. The mind has a sophisticated web containing the idea of "me" and the ideas about me. But, like any web, the concept is full of holes and is transparent when examined. If you are a timeless being, then the very foundation that this person is built on—and the web holding it together—is a lie. The idea that you were born and that you will die and *everything* else in between is a lie!

While volumes can be—and have been—written describing this ego, it is the direct path to self-

realization to just drop it. But how can the ego get rid of the ego? It can't. But, that does not mean it can't be dropped. You, as the ego, just can't do it. If it is a lie or mistake in identity, then the real remains present and it is the direct path to discover the real, and in so doing the unreal—the lie—effortlessly dropped as the false center in the mind. The web loses its sticky stuff, the person falls free and clear, and the web dies on the vine of truth. Essentially, all it takes is to investigate the claims of the mind.

Now, let's begin to examine some concepts and ideas—the lies about who you are. Upon examination of these ideas you will see them spontaneously fall away. There is nothing that you have done or even can do to discover your true nature. Remember, what you are is not in hiding, just overlooked by the mind. When the mind cannot validate something as true it lets the notion go. The seeming power (sticky stuff) of the ideas and concepts evaporates effortlessly when seen as false. In the removing of the false ideas, the supreme subject seemingly becomes more apparent although it is always bright and shining. Remember, "*What you are, is not a thing or object that the mind can grasp*" but it appears in the mind that there is a "you" and that is a problem if the statement is true.

## Unravel the Lies

If it is true that the mind has made erroneous assumptions about who you are and that an entire lifetime has been lived with those assumptions—what can possibly be done about it? It would stand to reason that it could possibly take many years to undo the error. Fortunately, this is not the case and the correction will take care of itself with simple investigation. Just because a lie has been or is being lived, does not mean that the truth is not readily available.

Here are three questions. You must know the answer to each with absolute certainty. They may seem simple to you and you may answer them very quickly, but where does your answer come from? Are they really simple questions or do they directly engage core beliefs? Have you ever really questioned yourself about what you think and why, regarding your answers? Are your answers based on faith, belief, intellect, or *absolute unshakable certainty*? You need to answer them from your own investigation. Answer them genuinely once and for all so that there is no remaining doubt and begin to clear up the assumptions or lies that the mind is operating on.

1. Are you a body?
2. Are you the thoughts?
3. Are you in the body?

While it is expected that you are already reading this paragraph, take the time to investigate and definitively answer the three questions. If there is any doubt, then keep investigating. *Knowing* the answer to these questions rather than having a belief or concept about them is one of the most powerful things you can do to discover who you really are.

Are you your body? If you are stuck on the idea that you are a body then let's take a look at a few things. If your feet were removed, would you still be? Assuming you said yes, then you can conclude that you are not your feet and you are not in them. What about your legs? If they were removed would you still be? I think you're getting the hang of this, so please continue removing body parts and asking if you would still be.... Now, you have reached your head. That is a tough one isn't it? We'll come back to it. But, at this point, you should see that you are not any other part of the body and that you are not in any other part of the body. Check to assure that your answer is not an intellectual one, but a genuine, gut level, understanding that you are not the body and you are not in the body. This understanding comes from truly looking and questioning. So genuine should your understanding be that if the body were to die at this moment you know you would not be touched by that death. *I Am Not This Object*.

Are you your thoughts? It seems apparent that the thought of something is never the actual thing—but have you really ever taken a good look at this? Think about the word “rock.” Is the word “rock” thought an actual rock? Can it be thrown, used as a doorstop, or anything? No, it is just a thought. You can describe the rock to a friend, but they will have their thought of the rock and you will have your thought of the rock. The two thoughts will not be exactly the same and neither of them are the actual rock. *The thought of something is never the thing*. It is just the thought of it! So the thought of “me” is not who I am, it is just the thought and not the actual. But, you know you are, so the thought of “me” must be referring to something that is real.

You may say, “Well I think...” but did that “I” thought really do any thinking? Look at this closely. Can the “I” thought, the idea of “me” do anything?

Is that “I” thought what you are, or, is it referring to something? Take a good look. Can that “I” thought do anything or be anything other than a thought? Is there any difference in the thought of

rock and the thought of “I” or are they both just thoughts referring to something? Investigate this and realize that ~~whether you are thinking or not, you still are. Therefore, you must not be the thoughts.~~

Are you *in* your body? You have come back to where we ended with the first question. It certainly seems like you are rattling around in your head somewhere! That is where the thinking voice is. No doubt that thinking *appears* to go on inside the brain and in it resides the “I” thought, but are you the brain, or wherever the “me” thought actually is, or is there just a *thought* of you occurring *somewhere*? When the brain is at rest, do you cease to be?

As you have looked through those three questions, have you come to a point of *really knowing* the answer is “no” to each of them? Is it knowing beyond doubt? If not, keep looking—investigate directly, and rather than “thinking about” see and consider this...

The body changes and will one day be buried. Thoughts change. They arise from nowhere, vibrate in the space of awareness a while, and then return to nowhere. Memories or stories remain and will one day be buried in the ground because they are stored in the brain. The body and brain are made of the elements and will one day return to the earth. Are you any of these things? Are you a thing at all? Is there any part of you that is not changing? Is there something there that is not moving? Has what you truly are been overlooked?

## I am Not

Up to this point, you have examined, although in very broad unscientific strokes, how the person you seem to be came about. In that process, it appears that the mind has performed as it was designed in identifying things. But, it also appears that it may have made some mistakes along the way and stepped outside of its role as the servant.

Did it identify you as a body?

Did it identify you as the thinker?

Did it identify you as the doer and choice maker in your life?

Did it identify something as *your* life?

Did it put itself in control and become the master?

Perhaps, what we have here is “a case of mistaken identity”!

These questions may have brought up a few more questions in your mind. You may be wondering if I am implying that you do not make choices and that you aren't the one doing things. It is a reasonable question and the answer is yes. I am not only implying that, I am encouraging you to see for yourself. Let's take a look at the questions one at a time.

Did your thinking mechanism, the so-called mind, identify you as a body? In the last chapter, we talked about whether or not you are a body. If you are still troubled by this question consider the simple fact that if there is *something* that is aware of the body, then that *something* must not be the body. Isn't it very clear that the body appears to something? That the thoughts of the body appear to something? The body is objective to what you truly are! It is an object. Keep looking directly into the facts of what actually is, in your *own* experience, rather than *thinking about* what it is.

Did the mind identify you as the thinker? While it might seem that you control your thoughts, is this possibly just an assumption, an unexamined belief? Is it really true?

Have you ever taken a look to see from where thoughts arise? Do you know what you are going to be thinking a second from now? Will what you think a second from now be based on everything that has come before? Can you choose not to have thoughts arise? When you begin watching your thoughts, perhaps you can begin to see that they simply appear... that they come up from nowhere and return to nowhere. Sometimes appearing to follow a line to a conclusion and sometimes just dropping off in the middle of the story and picking up in the middle of another.

Perhaps, as most of us seem to do, you give some thoughts great value while others are easily released to the nothingness. Sometimes you want the mind to think about something but it seems to have a will of its own and attention does not stay on task. If something happens or someone asks you a question, the mind diligently begins working on an answer and the thoughts arise spontaneously to fulfill the need. If we choose our thoughts and are in control of what is thought, why do we choose to suffer their effects? Why would the idea of controlling the mind even exist if we were the thinker? And even more graphically, if a portion of the brain were removed or damaged, then the person that you believe you are and the thoughts that you believe you think would radically change. Is all of this mental activity just a machine at work? Is anyone in control? No!

Did the mind identify you as the doer and choice maker in your life? Again, while it seems obvious that you are continually making choices and doing things, is that what is really going on or is it something that you have assumed is happening? We have looked at, and perhaps seen clearly, the fact that thoughts appear from nothing, nowhere and return to that nothing, nowhere. Is there truly a choice? Is the apparent “choice” anything other than a thought? So, your friend says to you, “Do you

want a red or green apple?" What goes into making that choice? Does the green spinach you had as a child influence the choice in any way? Having eaten many apples in your life perhaps the body/mind has a better reaction to the red ones and so you choose a red one. Perhaps the body is not hungry and so you answer, "I don't want one." But, who is this "I" again that made the choice? Is it really there? Or did a thought form appear, that was then labeled a choice (another thought arising) and then yet another thought arises, that "I decided"?

Did the mind identify something as your life? Once again, while it seems obvious that what is happening to us, around us, and within us is our life, the statement begs the question, whose life? When we say this is my house, this is my job, this is my thought, this is my body, but exactly who are we talking about here? Who is the person that has all these things? Is it the same person that also has a spirit or soul, or true essence? Is the mind making false claims of what it possesses?

I am *not* implying you should give away all of your possessions, for if that were required then *apparent* you would have to give up your body also, because it is something that you call yours. What is being called for here is just to take a look and see how things have been misidentified by the mind as belonging to someone. Even to the extent of calling the true self or soul or whatever you wish to call it, something that YOU have.

Remember, what is being pointed to is *not* a path. It is not a path of self-renunciation or purification or "doing" anything... other than simply looking at the truth of what is actually happening right now and at every ever-fresh moment. Just questioning and investigating the false assertions and beliefs... the claims of the mind will fall away when looked into.

Did it, the mind, put itself in control? Are you starting to see the servant has assumed a great deal of authority and at the same time built that authority on a premise that "you" are in control? It is a very nice trick. A grand illusion, and since you are a central figure in the illusion, you believe it.

*Any* assumption based on a false premise simply *cannot* be true. It is like asking, what is the source of the man in the moon? The question dissolves when there is the realization that the assumption that there is a man in the moon is a false premise.

Are you the body? Are you the thinker? Are you the doer and choice maker? Is this your life? Or is it all just happening spontaneously?



## Who am I?

The previous chapters were dedicated to looking at some of the misconceptions that have formed in the mind. You may have noticed that you look to the mind for answers and that the mind has substituted what is for what is thought.

In asking the previous questions you have begun to unravel some of the mind's claims to what is real and who you really are. Are you a body? Are you thoughts? Are you in the body? Keep the questions up and the false will be exposed and simply fall away. The misconceptions will not be missed.

The final question and the most powerful... "Who am I?" You have looked at what you are not, but what is left? If I am not my body, if I am not my thoughts, if I am not the thinker or chooser, then who am I? It is a question that will frustrate the mind as it tries to find *something*, a thought, to grasp and identify as itself. In the same vein of "who am I", is "what" and "where am I?" Remember, *what you are, is not a thing or object that the mind can grasp*. Hence, the mind's frustration with the question and the search. Remember, that the mind is not the right tool for this job, but that *must be discovered for yourself*. Put the mind to work on the task of answering the question. Who am I? What is the mind referencing when it says "me"?

You will find, while at the same time the mind *must* find for itself, that the "I" is nothing more than a thought or a label pointing to what is real, to what you truly are. The "I" concept is a creation of the mind and as such, as a concept, it has no validity. To the mind what you really are is nothing. Even the concept of you being nothing, the mind tries to turn into a thing and assign attributes to that nothing-ness.

As an example, the mind cannot grasp the seeming infinity of space. It is too infinite for the mind to turn into a thing. Yet all of space is not infinite against a timeless spaceless Self. What you are is beyond that. What you are is spaceless and timeless; the mind won't be able to grasp or conceptualize what you are. But what can be done is to expose the false notion that you are a limited being. It must be investigated until the mind sees that it is true, there is no one home in the mind! As the illusion comes apart, what is real comes to the foreground.

It would be pointless for me to tell you what you will find. As in the Tao, what is spoken is not the true Tao. I am certain that you already have expectations of what you will find with self-realization; those expectations will *not* be fulfilled. Expectations are finite and are just another thing that the mind focuses on instead of seeing what you truly are. Remember, as with the rock, the thought is never the actual, so any expectation, no matter how true the words seem to be, will not be what is actually discovered.

The mind will continue to try to assign attributes to what you are, while what you truly are is without attributes. As long as this message has been shared people have looked for words to describe the presence that you are. Words like timeless, spaceless, emptiness, the void, the Source, words which appear throughout this text. But, because these are just words, they can't be the actual. To the mind for something to be timeless then there must be time. For something to be spaceless, then there must be space. The opposites that the mind deals with, the duality, is the illusion that the apparent "you" resides within.

If you are ready to end your search, then drop the expectations and opinions of the mind and just ask the questions. If it is true that there is no person in the machine, then there is nothing that you can do anyway, so ask the questions to remove the false ideas. What you are stands in the clear and waiting.

to be seen. What you are is nothing less than that which allows for everything to be. All appearance, whether it be a thought, a thing, or creation itself is contained in and upon what you are. As with the Tao, you are “the source from which all appearance derives, the un-produced producer of all that is, and the guarantor of its stability and regularity”.

## The Real

Are you present?

Do you exist?

Can you deny that you are?

Can you get away from your own beingness?

To this point we have talked extensively about what you are not. The mind is left hanging, so speak, and is in search of something to grasp. "If I am none of these things, what am I?" It, the mind, continues to look inside of thought for what you are. *It will fail.* So, let us turn our attention to something that is real, something that you can't deny, and something that is outside of the limited mind.

If someone were to ask you if you exist, you would without hesitation say, "Yes, I do exist." It is something that you are sure of and there is no need or reason to question it. You do exist. While you may not be able to say how you know that you are, it cannot be denied that you are. You can't say how you know you are, because for that to be possible the mind would have to know you.

You may say, "I am because I think," but we have looked into that and you may now see that you are not the thinker of thoughts. But, still you are and nothing can be said about it. In fact, saying anything to prove that presence is there is not possible. Beingness does not depend on any thing. It is undeniable, but just taken for granted and overlooked in the same way that the mind overlooks the space between words. Every moment you are, regardless of what is appearing in the moment. Even while thinking, "I don't exist," you are.

While you have always known that you exist, have you ever really investigated that existence knowing of it? Does presence have a place where it starts? Does it have a place where it ends? Does it appear to be bound by time? Is it now or ever changing? Did it get older as the body aged? Is it constant or moving? Do you expect that it will ever be different? Can you, even for a moment, get out of it? If thinking stopped would you still be present? Does *anything* affect that presence? *Is it your presence or is it just presence?* It is the real in a world of change and illusion. Don't let the mind discount the presence—the beingness that you know is there. It will try, because it can't turn the presence into a thing. But do you begin to see that presence is what is being pointed to with words like spaceless and timeless? Can it really be that simple?

What about awareness? If someone were to ask you if you are aware, you would without hesitation say, "Yes, I am aware." It is something that you are sure of and there is no need or reason to question it.

Does awareness have a place where it starts? Does it have a place where it ends? Does it appear to be bound by time? Is it now or ever changing? Did it get older as the body aged? Is it constant or moving? Do you expect that it will ever be different? Can you, even for a moment, get out of it? If thinking stopped would you still be aware? Does anything affect that awareness? Is it *your* awareness or is it just awareness? It is the real and on that, the world of change and illusion appears. Again, don't let the mind discount the awareness that you are, it will try, because it can't turn that awareness into a thing. Do you see that awareness is what is being pointed to with words like spaceless and timeless?

*Presence of Awareness Awareness of Presence*

What touches that?

Now, before we proceed, we will be talking about the presence/awareness that you are. These are words. They are pointers to the actual. Don't let the mind claim them as attributes to the "I" thought.

as in “I am aware” or “I am present”. In this type of thinking the mind is laying claim to concepts. Use the pointers—but don’t let the mind grab onto them to define who you are. What you are is not a thing that the mind can grasp!

As we continue through the investigation even these words or pointers will be discarded. But for right now, they are key to seeing what is ultimately being pointed to—the supreme undivided subject. These words or pointers are like stepping-stones out of the limited mind and the conceptual person.

## Presence/Awareness

Presence of Awareness

Awareness of Presence

Look closely at these.

Who are you? Do you know?

The answer to the question seems to make more sense if it is asked: what are you? The answer is that you are the real. *You are the reality that gives validity to things.* You are the *unchanging reality* through which the temporal reality moves across and through. You are the constant in an ever changing appearance. *Every-thing* appears within spaceless awareness.

You are a presence, which cannot be defined by the mind. You are presence/awareness in which everything, including the mind appears.

Presence cannot be any more or less present than what it is. It is pristine, untouched, and undeniable, regardless of life's circumstances and the thoughts of the mind. Awareness cannot be any more or less aware than what it is while allowing everything to effortlessly appear across its surface. Presence of Awareness, Awareness of Presence—whole and complete, untouched by time, space, events, or thought. Everything that is, appears in awareness. Awareness does not pick, choose, or judge what appears upon or within it. It does not matter what happens, awareness contains it as it is.

The mind then gets involved and suddenly things appear as what you think about them, but *prior to, during, and after that*, awareness lovingly embraces all that is, including the lies about who you are. Even while the mind is rebelling against something, awareness shines its light on that rebellion. Some use the analogy of a mirror to describe awareness. It reflects *every-thing* clearly without being changed in any way by what it reflects.

You may think, "Okay, I am presence/awareness." Once you begin to look at this and take it into the mind—the mind will want to turn it into something that it has. Adding that concept onto the "I am" thought. "I am aware." "I am present." But, if that is what is happening, you're not "tuning in" so you can't speak to the actual presence/awareness that is readily available to be seen. Presence/awareness is not in the mind and it cannot be contained in the mind. The thought of presence/awareness, as with the thought of a rock, is not the actual. You don't have awareness; you are awareness. You don't have a presence; you are presence. The thought of it turns what you actually are into a concept to which the mind can relate. While that is happening, you are the presence/awareness standing in the clear waiting to be discovered. This cannot be stressed enough, *everything is just an appearance within the awareness that you are*; without exception, everything.

*Only the thought of presence/awareness can be brought into the mind for consideration. While you are thinking about presence/awareness you are present and aware. You can't objectify what you are.*

So how do you stay with the presence/awareness that you are? How do you "tune in"? It is effortless because it is always on... you don't have to try, just see. If you're trying, then you're just not noticing that it is inescapable and functioning all the time; or you're trying to become something that you already are! Presence is effortless. Awareness is effortless. The fact is you don't have any choice but to stay with it, because you are it! Presence does not change. Awareness does not change. It does not move. It does not hide. But be watchful: don't turn the obvious presence/awareness into a concept or an idea about yourself. Stay with the livingness of it by not following what the mind thinks about it. *Presence—Awareness is in the ever present now.*

Presence/awareness refer to the simple, undeniable beingness that is present and aware. In the

same way that we have looked at presence/awareness—beingness *points* to that timeless, spaceless Self.

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There was a recent question that began along the lines of, “When you take your attention within see the beingness...”

This question points out a rather basic misunderstanding and hints at an expectation of what being pointed to and where it is. There are numerous problems with the question, but really two oft-overlooked misunderstandings work together to complicate clear seeing. The first one is attention. Attention is a tool of the mind, like the hand is to the body; attention can only be placed on things. Attention is nothing more than the focus of the senses and mental ideas on an object. As we have discussed, what you are is not a thing that the mind can grasp. So, although it was never explicitly stated, let us be clear. Attention cannot be placed on what you are. Attention can be placed on the thoughts of presence and the thoughts of awareness, on thoughts of beingness, but not the actual beingness. This is a confusing point because the suggestion is there to “stay with” the presence/awareness that you are. Well, how is that done if not using attention? The truth is that you have no choice but to stay with the presence/awareness that you are, because it is what you are. The subtlety is to recognize, and specifically for the mind to recognize, that your beingness is always present whether attention is on the idea of being aware or being present—or not. There is literally nothing you can do to get out of your own beingness. So, attention is a tool of the mind and attention will never touch what you are—or what is being pointed to. Therefore, it is of no value in finding understanding.

The second part of the misunderstanding is that what you are is within. How many times have you heard to search within? Perhaps you have practiced meditation as a tool or technique to “go deeper.” What is it that we are going into and how deep it is? Remember the pointer that, “You are what you seek”? What you are is not in anything! What you are is not outside of anything. In and out are the mind’s duality or illusion. What you are is what you have always been, not the thoughts, concepts, or body, but the simple presence, the awareness, the beingness. There is no place where beingness starts and where it ends. Try to find a beginning and/or end in time or space to beingness, and you cannot. Again, while there is nothing wrong with practices, remember that any practice is in time. They are limited experiences by their very nature. Practice is an attempt to gain something. What is pointed to here is already present, already complete. What is being pointed to is what you already are—not something that you can become with practice or in a future time.

## Past, Present, and Future

Do you live in the past, the present, or the future? This is a trick question. There is only the present moment. There is only now! There may be thinking about the past but when is it done? There may be thinking about the future, but when is it done? There is a subtle shift when the present moment is truly recognized. For in order to “tune in”, so to speak to the present moment, you have *to leave the mind behind*. The mind lags by a split second as it processes sensory input and converts the raw input into thoughts. By the time you are thinking about the now, the ever present now is in a new and ever fresh now which is shining brightly as what you are.

The presence/awareness or beingness that you are is in the now and there is nothing else. The past is a dead issue in memory, while the future is imagination. Now like presence/awareness is ever fresh and ever renewed, constant and unchanging. You can't get out of it. It is not possible to be anywhere but now. The appearance of time passes through the present, while the present remains constant and unchanged by time. Time is really nothing more than the movement of things across the timeless presence/awareness that you are. Without the mind, time would not be known.

There is no past except in thought; there is no future except in thought. There is no present except in thought, there is only right now, and it is so immediate that the mind can't grasp it. You can only become fully present if you leave the mind behind.

You may be wondering how you can do this. Again, this is what is already happening. You are not in the mind now. It is always the present. Words are an obvious problem; so don't get hung up on them. There is nothing that needs to be done or practiced. Just notice that it is always now. See that time is really a thing of the mind. Because the focus is in the mind, you miss the immediacy and the freshness of now. The “tuning in”, so to speak, is just a matter of noticing the ever-fresh moment as it is. Step out of your head, and you are present/aware/and now.

*My mind is consumed with the questions...*

*Am I present?*

*Am I aware?*

*Is there anything wrong with the presence/awareness?*

*Has it ever changed?*

*Who am I?*

*What am I?*

*Who is asking these questions?*

*Now, Now, Now*

*The questions are there when I awake.*

*The questions are there in everything I do.*

*The questions are there as I fall asleep.*

*Suddenly*

*there is waking, there is doing, there is falling asleep. I am not doing it, it is all happening within the presence/awareness that I am.*

*Just as it always has.*

## What Happens to “Me”?

Everything is just appearance, including the movements that appear to be your life and you. The you, whom we have talked about in this book, is not real other than as an appearance or temporary manifestation. The person you take yourself to be has never been, except as a thought. When the “thought is seen for what it is, the mind spontaneously drops the false concept and then who was something have happened to? Functioning goes on just as before, but without a limited imaginary personal reference point that things are happening to. When the person is dropped, new freedom is found in the experience. This freedom occurs because the judgmental mind no longer has a “you” to point a finger at. Likewise, there is no other to point the finger of blame at. Life moves freely like a river, effortlessly through the manifestation regardless of the appearance. Even if the appearance is in conflict, what you are shines brightly and the conflict does not touch that!

These are ideas that the mind simply cannot understand. It will reject the notion in countless ways and the mind will fear for its dominance and very survival. Defenses will surface to protect the fragile ego and many of them will be disguised as more questions. But, how long have you been searching? Maybe it is time to bring that search to an end. Just ask the questions without expectation of the answer and the wisdom of the Self will take over and do the rest. Having reached the point where you are ready to just surrender control, the apparent door will open and reveal the infinite possibility that you are.

What you are and what you will find is beyond the mind’s ability to grasp. Everything is just appearance in the unlimited Self that you are. Literally everything is appearance, including the mind and the thought of you as a separate being.



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