

What Does Dylan's All Along The Watchtower Really Mean?

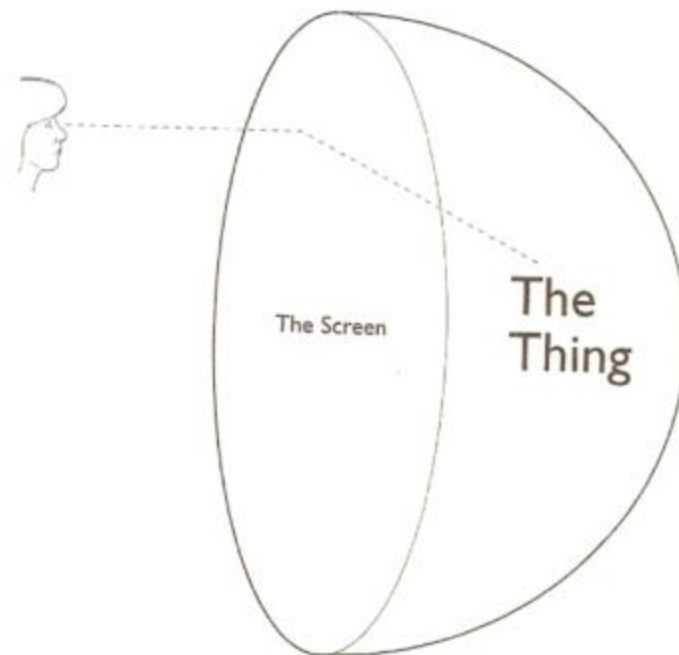
*There must be some way out of here, said the Joker to the Thief,
There's too much confusion, I can't get no relief.
No reason to get excited, the Thief he kindly spoke,
There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke,
But you and I, we've been through that, and this is not our fate,
So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late.*

All Along the Watchtower is alluding to a spiritual way of seeing the world from a higher level of consciousness. The song can only be correctly understood with a discussion of spirituality, as in seeing the world in a spiritual way from a higher level of consciousness. Leonard Cohen alluded to this spiritual way of seeing the world in Suzanne when he wrote:

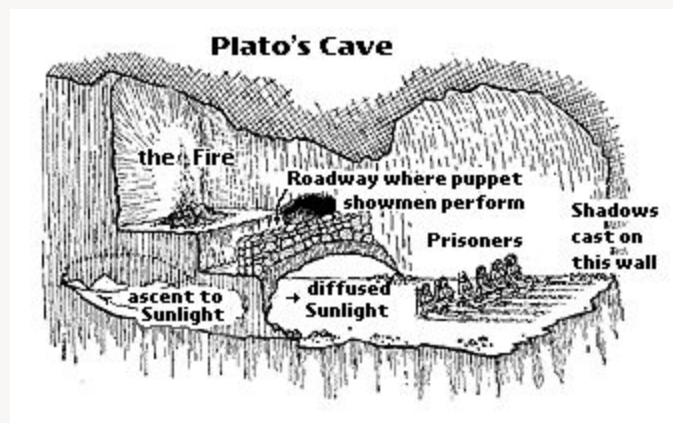
*And Jesus was a sailor when he walked upon the water,
And he spent a long time watching from his lonely wooden tower,
And when he knew for certain only drowning men could see him,
He said all men shall be sailors then until the sea shall free them.*

The *Watchtower* is a metaphor for this spiritual way of seeing the world from a higher level of consciousness. The *Sea* is a metaphor for the spiritual *Source* of that seeing, which is the *Source* of consciousness. The basic idea for this spiritual way of seeing the world goes back to Plato and the Allegory of the Cave. In the Allegory, Plato described the perceivable physical world is like a movie the true spiritual nature of consciousness is watching from its seat out in the audience. The spiritual nature of consciousness out in the movie audience only mistakenly believes that it is a part of the movie it is watching when it falsely identifies itself with its character in the movie.

The other analogy is a computer generated virtual reality, like Neo in the Matrix. Just like a movie, the animated images of the virtual reality are projected from a computer screen to an observer that plays the virtual reality game and watches the virtual reality movie. The observer, which is the spiritual nature of consciousness, is always out in the audience, but falsely believes itself to be a part of the virtual reality movie when it identifies itself with its character in the movie. When that spiritual presence of consciousness detaches itself from its character and sees the movie with a sense of distance from the movie, the observer sees things from a higher level of consciousness. It is as though the observer comes out of the movie, but it never really was a part of the movie in the first place. It only falsely believed it was a part of the movie when it identified itself with its character in the movie.



Plato calls a spiritual presence of consciousness *'a prisoner'* if it believes the false belief about itself that it is its character in the movie it is watching. A higher level of consciousness that allows the observer to see things with a sense of distance and detachment from them is the way Plato describes spiritual freedom in the Allegory.

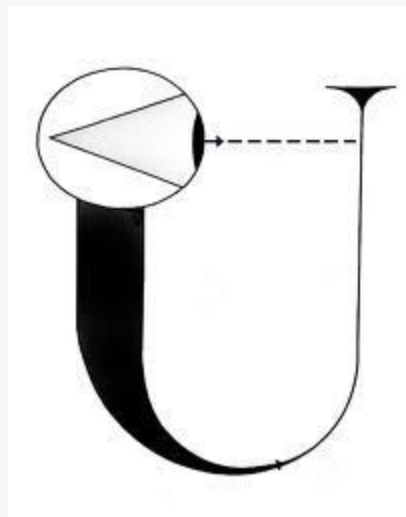


The first line of *All Along the Watchtower* alludes to this kind of spiritual freedom when it says: *'There must be some way out of here'*. The word *'here'* refers to the perceivable physical world. The *'way out'* refers to the spiritual freedom the spiritual nature of consciousness achieves when it no longer identifies itself with its physical character in that physical world, which happens naturally when it sees that world with a sense of distance and detachment from a higher level of consciousness. The *Watchtower* is the *'way out'*. The reason *'there's too much confusion'* is things

are not seen clearly for what they really are. Everything that can be seen in the physical world is only a part of the virtual reality movie the spiritual nature of consciousness is watching.

Things are confusing if consciousness identifies itself with its physical character in that movie. Part of that confusion is *'talking falsely'*, as when the spiritual nature of consciousness identifies itself with its physical character in that physical world and falsely says *'I am a physical person in the physical world that I'm perceiving'*. A spiritual presence of consciousness that sees things from a higher level of consciousness would never say such a false thing about itself. A spiritual presence of consciousness that sees things from a higher level of consciousness and knows what it really is can only say about itself: *'I Am'*, and *'there appears to be a physical person in the physical world I perceive, which is my character in the virtual reality'*.

The significance of the *Joker* is that consciousness is playing a joke on itself when it identifies itself with its character in the virtual reality and doesn't know what it really is. In that sense, *'life is but a joke'*. Falsely identifying oneself with one's character in the virtual reality movie of the physical world one is watching is a really bad joke. The significance of the *Thief* is the loss of the knowledge of the true spiritual nature of what one really is. When one loses this knowledge, one doesn't know what one really is. The irony of course is that one has stolen that knowledge from oneself by identifying oneself with a physical person in the physical world that one perceives. One is both the *Joker* and the *Thief*. To use the Beatles analogy of the *Fool on the Hill*, one is the *Fool* who is fooling oneself.



The Levels of Awakening of Consciousness

Here's a nice classification scheme for the levels of consciousness that makes a lot of sense:

-Ego consciousness: the *Self* identified with ego. The *Self* is a presence of consciousness that emotionally identifies itself with its mentally constructed personal self-concept, which is its ego.

-*Soul consciousness*: The *Self* is aware of itself as a presence of consciousness with its own sense of being present, but is not ascended, and is susceptible to falling back into ego consciousness.

-*Atmanic consciousness*: the *Self* ascends to a higher level of consciousness through a process of emotionally detaching itself from its world. The ascended *Self* sees its world with a sense of distance and detachment and is no longer susceptible to falling back into ego consciousness.

-*Source consciousness*: the divided being of the *Self* dissolves back into the undivided being of *No-self*, which happens in an ultimate state of freefall as its world disappears from existence.

Soul consciousness lived in a state of surrender to divine will is a stable way to live one's life. Jed McKenna calls this level of awakening the integrated state or the born again experience. In a state of surrender, ego consciousness dies away and soul consciousness takes its place. One's identity dies to ego and is reborn of the spirit. This level of awakening is characterized by feelings of connection, expressions of creativity, and right actions that naturally arise as the flow of energy through one's body comes into alignment with the normal flow of things through one's world. An example of soul consciousness lived in a state of surrender is the life of St Francis as depicted in the movie *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*. McKenna points out this way of living one's life and this state of consciousness is what most spiritual seekers are actually seeking, and so this is as far as most spiritual seekers are willing to go with their awakening process. Bernadette Roberts calls this state the mystical union of self with God, which is as far as most religions are willing to go. There is little motivation to go further once one gets beyond ego consciousness. The ultimate union of the *Self* with the *Source*, as in the dissolution of the divided being of the *Self* into the undivided being of *No-self*, really has nothing to recommend it except for the truth.

The Bible has an interesting way of describing ego consciousness. The Bible calls a presence of consciousness the *spirit of God*, but also sometimes calls this spirit an angel. God gave the angels free will, which means they are free to focus their attention wherever they want to, but God also told the angels to obey God's will. When an angel focuses its attention in a personally biased way, that angel is disobeying God's commandment. A personally biased expression of free will always interferes with God's will. God's will is inherently unbiased. Biased personal will opposes and resists God's will. A fallen angel that disobeys God's will is called a demon, and is thrown into hell. Hell is literally a life lived in a state of personally biased ego consciousness. An angel becomes a demon when it disobeys God's will and expresses personally biased individual will, which is the essence of ego consciousness. The Bible refers to a demon as an abomination because of its disobedience to God's will. Ego consciousness is the abomination.

This fits in nicely with what the book of Genesis says about original sin. Adam and Eve committed the original sin when they ate fruit from the tree of knowledge and knew themselves to be bodies. With this knowledge, they knew the difference between good and evil. Good and bad is always an assessment one must make in a personally biased way from one's own point of view as one identifies oneself with a body. From the personally biased point of view of a body,

eating is good and being eaten is bad. The problem is we live in a world where bodies must eat each other in order to survive. The desire to eat is always in conflict with the fear of being eaten. There is no way to resolve this emotional conflict at the level of a body expressing these survival emotions. This emotional conflict can only be judged to be good or bad if one identifies oneself with a body, which is the original sin. Emotionally identifying oneself with a body is the essence of ego consciousness. If one doesn't identify oneself with a body, then it's all good. Everything is good because everything is God's creation. To see this goodness, one has to rise to a higher level of consciousness, such as soul consciousness lived in a state of surrender to God's will. When one's consciousness rises to a higher level and one can see the goodness of God's creation, demonic ego consciousness becomes angelic spiritual consciousness.

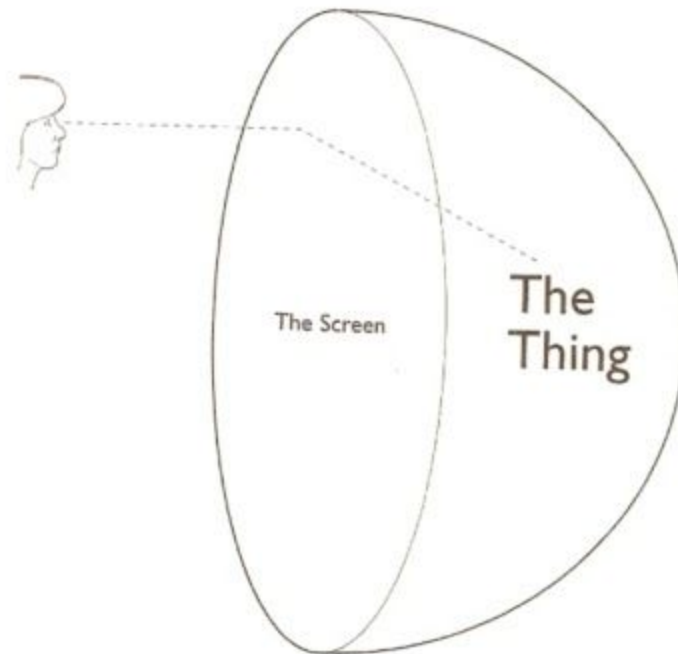
Doing Nothing is True Meditation

Doing nothing at a personal level, also known as becoming desireless, is the natural outcome of seeing the person that one takes oneself to be as an illusion, losing interest in paying attention to that illusion, and withdrawing one's attention and investment of emotional energy away from the illusion. That's how one becomes willing to do nothing at a personal level. Withdrawing one's attention away from the illusion allows one to shift one's attention away from the illusion so that one can look within and redirect one's focus of attention onto one's own sense of being present as an individual presence of consciousness with its own inherent sense of individual being. That individual presence of consciousness is called the *Self*, and that individual being is called *I Am*.

It serves no useful purpose to avoid being totally blunt about the nature of the problem. As Plato tells us in the Allegory, the perceivable physical world is no more real than a movie that one is watching from one's seat in the audience, or to use the analogy of the Matrix, is no more real than a computer generated virtual reality game that one is playing. Images of the virtual reality are projected from the computer screen to the point of view of the observer out in the audience. The projected images can be reduced to bits of information encoded on the computer screen. A projected image in essence is a form of information. Those forms of information are animated in the flow of energy that flows through the computer, just like the animated images of a movie that is displayed on a computer screen. Everything that can be perceived in the movie is a form of information animated in the flow of energy. The observer itself is not a form of information, and in this sense, the *Self* is *not-a-thing*. The *Self* is a presence of consciousness out in the movie audience that arises at a point of view in relation to the screen, but it is *not-a-thing*.

Everything that can be perceived in the physical world is a form of information projected like an image from a screen to the point of view of the *Self* that perceives that image, but the observer itself is *not-a-thing*. Consciousness itself is *not-a-thing* that consciousness can perceive. As described in Zen, consciousness is the *No-thing*. The problem is, as long as one is paying attention to *things*, one is not paying attention to one's true nature as the *Self*. One's attention is so absorbed in the movie that one is watching, one doesn't know who one really is. Even worse than not knowing who one really is, one mistakenly takes oneself to be the central character of

the movie that one is watching. One takes oneself to be a physical person in the movie of the physical world that one is watching. One identifies oneself with that physical person, which is no more real than an animated form of information projected like an image from a movie screen and animated in the flow of energy. One's self-identification with that physical person is really only a false belief that one believes about oneself, which is otherwise known as a delusion.



The Observer, the Screen and the Thing

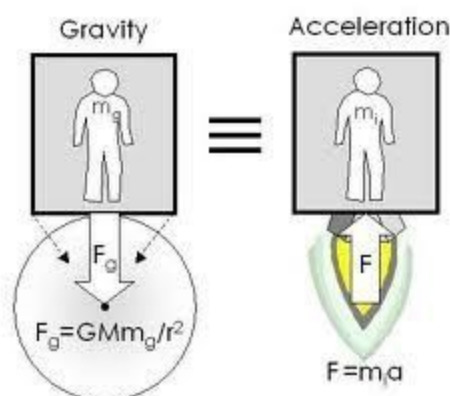
The nature of that false belief is a self-concept. One has the self-concept that one is a physical person in the movie of the physical world that one perceives. One's self-concept is also a part of the movie. In effect, one's central character in the movie is giving a self-referential narration of the movie and one is identifying oneself with that character. One's self-concept is created out of nothing more than one's character in the movie giving a self-referential narration of the movie.

Why the hell would one ever believe this delusional self-concept or false belief about oneself? Remarkably, the answer can be found in the first few lines of the book of Genesis:

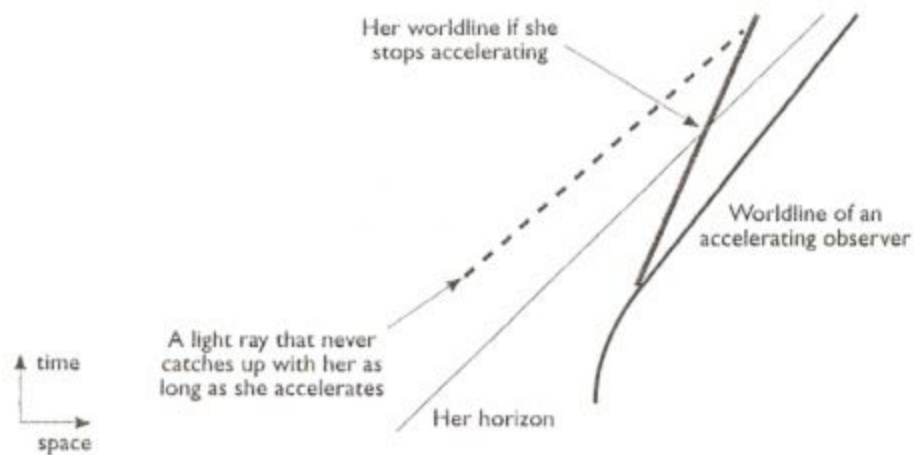
*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth
And the earth was without form and void
And darkness was upon the face of the deep
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters
And God said 'Let there be light'; and there was light
And God saw the light, that it was good
And God divided the light from the darkness*

The key thing to realize is that the *Spirit of God* is the *Self*, which is the individual presence of consciousness at the center of its own perceivable physical world. That world is no more real than a movie the *Self* is watching as animated images of that world are projected from a screen to the central point of view of *Self*. That world is created as the *Spirit of God* moves over the *face of the deep*. The *face of the deep* is the movie screen.

There are some big concepts here that need to be unpacked, and there is no way to unpack them without understanding something about modern physics. The *Spirit of God* moving over the *face of the deep* can be understood as an observer in an accelerated frame of reference. The idea of an observer in an accelerated frame of reference is fundamental to modern physics in the sense of relativity theory. In relativity theory, there really is no such thing as a force, only observers undergoing accelerated motion. This idea is called the *Principle of Equivalence*:



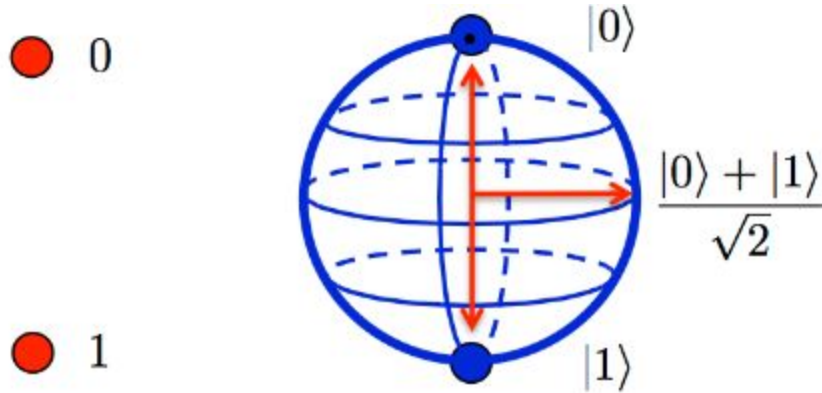
The observer's frame of reference essentially defines space-time. Space-time is like a frame of a movie that projects images of the movie to the observer's point of view with each frame of the movie and animates those images over an animated sequence of frames, just like the animated images of a movie projected from and animated on a computer screen. The key idea is each frame of the movie is defined on a movie screen. Relativity theory tells us exactly where that movie screen comes from. The movie screen is an event horizon that arises in the observer's accelerated frame of reference. Every accelerating observer has an event horizon, which is a bounding surface of space that limits the observer's observation of things in space. Nothing is observable to the observer beyond its event horizon. This phenomenon arises in a natural way from the constancy of the speed of light for all observers. The speed of light is independent of the observer's own state of motion, and is like the maximal rate of information transfer in three dimensional space. Due to this property of the speed of light, every observer in an accelerated frame of reference has an event horizon that limits the observer's observation of things in space.



Accelerating Observer's Event Horizon

The book of Genesis is telling us that the accelerating observer is the *Spirit of God*, and that the observer's event horizon is the *face of the deep*. The observer's world is created as the *Spirit of God* moves over the *face of the deep*. The essential nature of that movement is the observer's accelerated motion. The observer's event horizon is the computer screen that encodes bits of information, which allows forms of information to become projected like images from the screen to the observer's central point of view, where the images are perceived by the observer. Those images are animated in the flow of energy. That flow of energy arises from the observer's own accelerated motion in its accelerated frame of reference.

We still need to explain why the observer's event horizon encodes bits of information, just like a computer screen. Modern physics has given us this explanation, which is called the holographic principle of quantum gravity. In effect, the holographic principle supersedes the equivalence principle. There's no easy way to explain the holographic principle without getting into the weeds of the mathematical formalism of modern physics, which is basically the idea of how space-time geometry is quantized, but in spite of this difficulty, it is remarkably simple to state the nature of the holographic principle. Basically, every point on the observer's event horizon is smeared out into an area element like a pixel on a screen, and each pixel on the screen encodes a quantized bit of information called a qubit. Just like the bits of information encoded on a computer screen, each qubit is like a switch that is either on or off, and so encodes information in a binary code of 1's and 0's. Unlike a classical computer, the qubits are defined on the screen in a rotationally invariant way, much like spin variables defined in quantum theory that only point up or down. Due to rotational invariance, qubits have a property called quantum entanglement. A classical bit of information is like a vector that can only point up or down, but an entangled qubit can point in any direction, which is what gives the qubits their rotational invariance.

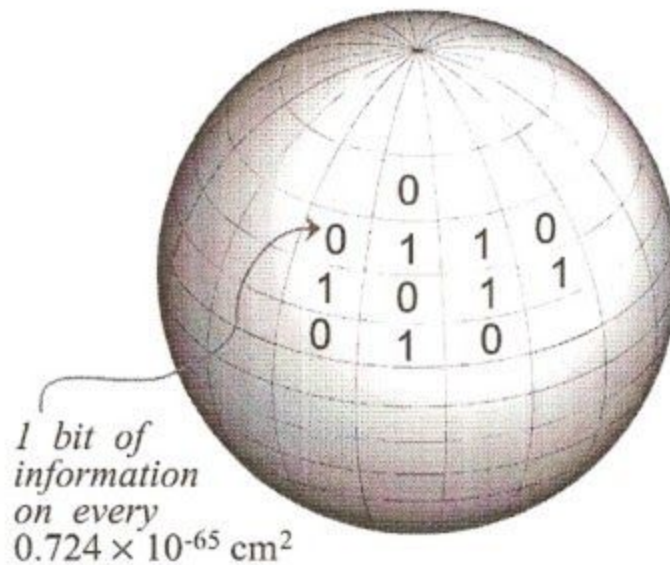


Classical Bit

Qubit

Qubit as the Information Encoded on a Planck Size Event Horizon

The holographic principle basically says that each pixel defined on the observer's event horizon encodes a quantized bit of information as a qubit. In quantum gravity, the pixel size is called the Planck area. The observer's event horizon is a bounding surface of space like the surface of a sphere that limits the observer's observations of things in space from the perspective of its own central point of view, but can only arise in the observer's own accelerated frame of reference.



Holographic Principle

We now have all the pieces of the puzzle we need to explain how the observer's world is created. When the observer enters into an accelerated frame of reference, its event horizon arises that acts as a holographic screen that encodes bits of information for everything the observer can observe

in its world. Everything the observer observes is a form of information projected like an image from the observer's screen to its central point of view and animated in the flow of energy. Not only does the observer's screen arise in its own accelerated frame of reference, but the flow of energy also arises due to the observer's accelerated motion. Just as the book of Genesis says, the observer's world is created as the *Spirit of God* moves over the *face of the deep*. The *Spirit of God* is the observer in accelerated motion, and the *face of the deep* is the observer's event horizon that acts as a holographic screen.

The key thing about the holographic principle is to realize that things don't actually exist in three dimensional space. The observer's perceivable world is a holographic world. All the fundamental quantized bits of information for that world, the qubits, are defined on an event horizon that is a two dimensional bounding surface of space that limits its observations of things in space. The observation of anything in three dimensional space is a holographic projection of a holographic image from the observer's holographic screen to its central point of view. The observer itself is not a holographic projection. The observer is a presence of consciousness at the central point of view of its own holographic world, called the *Self*. The *Self* is *not-a-thing* that it can perceive.

At this point it should be crystal clear what Genesis means when it says the world is created as the *Spirit of God* moves over the *face of the deep*. There are a few more puzzles in Genesis that we need to sort out. The biggest puzzle is what is meant when Genesis says *Let there be light*, and *God divided the light from the darkness*. The key concept is a holographic world can only be created through holographic projection. Just like the animated images of a movie, the light of a movie projector must project those images. This is where things get a bit tricky. Just as the observer itself, which is a presence of consciousness called the *Self*, is *not-a-thing* that it can perceive in its holographic world, the *light* that is projecting the holographic images of that world is not physical light. In quantum theory, physical light is understood as a quantum particle, which is called a photon of electromagnetic radiation. Like everything else that can be perceived in a holographic world, that quantum particle can be reduced to quantized bits of information, the qubits, encoded on a holographic screen. A photon is just another form of information projected like an image from the observer's holographic screen to its central point of view. A photon, which is a quantum particle of physical light, cannot be the *light* Genesis refers to, which is like the light of a movie projector projecting images from the observer's screen back to the observer.

What is the nature of this *light*? The answer of course is, the *light* Genesis refers to is the *Light of Consciousness*. The presence of consciousness at the center of its own holographic world, called the *Self*, is not just a presence of perceiving consciousness in the sense of the observer, but is also the *light of consciousness* that projects the images of that world back to the observer. The observer is perceiving those images, but the *light of consciousness* has to project those images back to the observer from its own holographic screen. The *Self* has both a perceiving aspect, which is the observer, and a projecting aspect, which is the *light of consciousness*.

This situation is really weird, but creation of a world is not really possible any other way. The observer's holographic screen arises as an event horizon due to its own accelerated motion, which is literally the *Spirit of God* moving over the *face of the deep*. All the quantized bits of information, the qubits, that define everything in that holographic world are encoded on that holographic screen. Everything the observer can observe in its world is a form of information projected like an image from its own screen to its central point of view. Even the flow of energy that animates those forms of information arises from the observer's own accelerated motion. To cap things off, we now find out that the light of the movie projector that projects those images is the *light of consciousness* that also emanates from the central point of view of the observer. The *light of consciousness* is the *light* that is illuminating the observer's own holographic world.

Why did *God divide the light from the darkness*? This is where we have to get really deep. What does Genesis mean when it refers to the *deep* or the *darkness* or the *void*? These words refer to the *Source of Consciousness*, but the *Source* can only be described in terms of negation, as in the *darkness* is the *absence of the light* or the *void* is the *absence of everything*. The *Source of Consciousness* is the *Source of the Self*, which is an individual presence of consciousness at the center of its own holographic world. Everything perceived in that holographic world is a form of information. The perceiving *Self* is *not-a-thing*, and so the *Source* can only be described in terms of negation as *formless nothingness*, or *without form and void*. The *Source of the Light of Consciousness* can only be described as *darkness*. The *light of consciousness* that is needed to illuminate a holographic world is divided from the *darkness* of the *Source*.

The individual being of the *Self*, called *I Am*, is divided from the *undivided being of the Source*. The *Source* is pure *undivided being*, or pure *oneness*. Unlike a holographic world that is limited by a holographic screen, the *Source is unlimited*. That *unlimited being is infinite*. The reason the *Source* is called the *deep* is because it is *unlimited or infinite*. Unlike a holographic world where everything perceived is like an image projected from a holographic screen, nothing is perceived in the *Source*. The *Source* is nothing perceivable, which is pure *nothingness of being*. Unlike a holographic world where everything perceived is imaginary, *the pure being of the Source is real*.

The *Source* is the ultimate nature of reality. As the ultimate nature of existence, it can also be called the *ground of being*. The *true nature of being* belongs solely to the *Source*. The imaginary images of a holographic world have no real being. They're unreal. Only the *Source* has *being* and is *real*. The *Source is real* because it is the *ground of being*, and can *never cease to be*. It is the ultimate nature of existence that can never cease to exist. Unlike the imaginary images of a holographic world that are in a constant state of flux and constantly change over the course of time, the *Source is timeless being* that can never change. The Bhagavad-Gita perfectly states this essential distinction between the virtual reality of a holographic world and the absolute reality of the *Source* when it says:

The unreal has no being; the real never ceases to be.

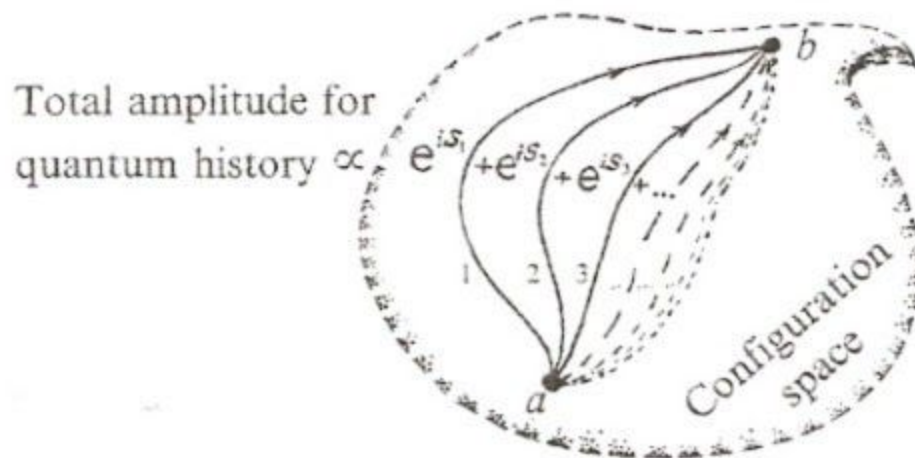
The *Source* is the *Creator*. A holographic world is its creation. Things get complicated because the *Source* does not directly perceive that holographic world. The individual being of the *Self* is divided from the undivided being of the *Source* so that holographic world can be created and perceived. The *Self* is a presence of consciousness that perceives its own holographic world, and that world is created as the *Self* enters into an accelerated frame of reference, which is the *Spirit of God* moving over the *face of the deep*. The *face of the deep* is the holographic screen that defines that holographic world. The *Self* is not only the perceiving consciousness of the observer at the center of that world, but is also the *light of consciousness* that illuminates that holographic world. Just as the *individual being of the Self* is divided from the *undivided being of Source*, the illuminating *light of consciousness* is divided from the *darkness of the Source*.

God saw the light, that it was good. This is another way of saying that God's creation is good. That's why a holographic world is created for the *Self* to perceive. That creation is inherently good. Creation is inherently good as long as the *Self* only perceives that holographic world from a higher level of consciousness, like an observer out in a movie audience that is only watching the movie. A problem arises when the observer begins to identify itself with its character in the movie and no longer knows what it really is. That problem is called self-identification. The *Self* out in the movie audience mistakenly identifies itself with its character in the movie and does not know what it really is. Instead of knowing what it really is, the *Self* identifies itself with a personal self-concept, which is a false belief that it believes about itself. That's the nature of delusion. All personal self-concepts are delusional. The *Self* mistakenly believes it is a physical person in the movie of the physical world it is watching from its seat out in the movie audience.

As previously mentioned, this delusional self-concept is no more real than the self-referential narration of the movie by the central character of the movie. Why would the *Self* believe this false belief about itself? The problem has to do with emotions. Emotional expressions are the energy that animates forms of information, like the animated form of a body. This animating energy fundamentally arises in the observer's own accelerated frame of reference, which is literally the *Spirit of God* moving over the *face of the deep*. Emotional expressions literally arise from the observer's own accelerated motion. Emotions are the energy of accelerated motions, and only the observer can really move. Everything else that appears to move in a holographic world is a holographic illusion that arises as forms of information are projected like images from the observer's holographic screen to its central point of view and as those images are animated in the flow of energy, which fundamentally arises from the observer's own accelerated motion. The observer is literally creating its own emotional expressions with its own accelerated motion.

In order to understand how this actually happens, we have to understand something about the quantum state of potentiality that describes the potential for all possible motions. The quantum state is like a sum over all possible paths in some information configuration space. Quantum theory tells us that each possible path is weighted with a probability factor that is the essence of the quantum wavefunction. The quantum wavefunction in turn depends on a quantity called the action, which is like a measurement of distance between two points along some path in the

information configuration space. The most likely path in the sense of quantum probability is the path of least action, which is like the path that measures the shortest possible distance between those two points. Quantum probability is like any other probability distribution. That probability distribution can only be accurately measured if it is measured in an unbiased way. An unbiased measurement is what physicists call a random measurement or a random choice along the lines of randomly flipping a coin, or to use Einstein's famous metaphor, randomly throwing dice.



Quantum State as the Sum Over all Possible Paths

The essential problem of quantum theory is the problem of choice. In quantum theory, whenever one wants to measure something, also known as making an observation of something, one has to make a choice. The quantum state of potentiality only determines probability amplitudes with which any possible choice can be made. In more specific terms, every point along some path in the information configuration space is a decision point about what to observe at that point and which path to follow. The other way to say this is the quantum state of potentiality for the world is a sum or superposition over all possible observable states of the world and all possible paths that can be taken in the world. Every point along some path is a decision point about what to observe in the world at that point and which path to follow through the world. One always has a choice about what to observe and which path to follow. The way we express our choices is in terms of how we focus our attention on the world. Through our focus of attention, we are always free to choose what to observe in the world and which path to follow through the world.



Decision Point

Although we have the freedom to make these choices, the laws of physics as incorporated into the quantum state of potentiality constrain the way we can make choices. For example, if one makes the choice that one wants to walk on water, the law of gravity is an important constraint on one's ability to make this choice. All laws of physics can be expressed as an action principle, and are incorporated into the quantum state in terms of the action that measures distance along some path in the information configuration space. The action in turn determines the quantum wavefunction, which gives the probability amplitudes for making any possible choice. The most likely path in the sense of quantum probability is the path of least action, which is like the path that measures the shortest possible distance between any two points, but there is an important caveat. The path of least action is only the most likely path if choices are made in an unbiased or random way. If bias arises in the way choices are made, then all bets are off. If the dice are loaded, then the game is rigged. The laws of physics only have predictability if choices are made in an unbiased way. If bias arises in the way choices are made, the laws of physics lose their predictability. As Morpheus tells Neo in the Matrix, the laws of physics, which are like the computational rules that govern the operation of a computer, can be bent or broken. If the law of gravity is bent enough, it does become possible to walk on water.



How does one bend or break the laws of physics? The answer is through bias in the focus of one's attention. When one's attention becomes biased enough, it becomes possible to choose to follow a path that significantly deviates from the path of least action. With sufficient bias in the focus of one's attention, it becomes possible to choose to observe something in the world that would otherwise be very unlikely in terms of quantum probability. These choices seem to violate the laws of physics. The laws of physics really aren't immutable laws, but more like guidelines that determine the likelihood of any choice as long as that choice is made in an unbiased way.

In terms of spirituality, this state of affairs has profound implications. Individual choice is always made by an individual presence of consciousness, which is the *Self*. Only the *Self* has free will and the ability to make choices through the focus of its attention. The problem is the *Self* is only a fragment of the *Source*. The individual being of the *Self*, which is called *I Am*, is divided from the undivided being of the *Source*. The *Source* creates the world for the *Self*, and the *Self*, as a presence of consciousness, perceives that world. The *Self* has free will in the sense it is free to perceive anything in and follow any path through that world that it wants, but this is only at the level of individual will. When the *Source* creates the world, this is an expression of God's will.

God's will is always unbiased. There is a normal flow of energy through the world that reflects unbiased choice. The best example of God's will is things tend to follow the path of least action as long as choices are made in an unbiased way. That's why we have a classical law of gravity.

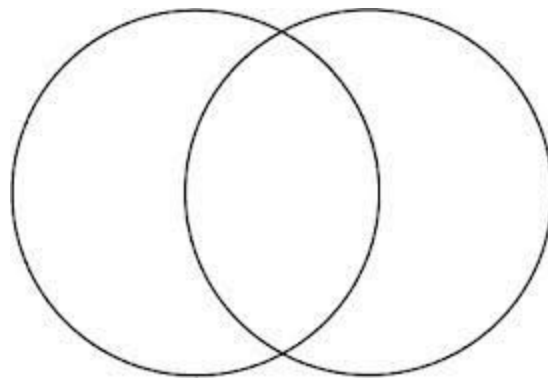


Normal Flow of Energy Through the Observer's Perceivable World

To use the metaphor from the Bible, when the *Self* divided itself from the *Source*, the *Source* gave the *Self* free will, which is its ability to freely focus its attention anywhere it wants to in the world it perceives, but the *Self* was also told to obey God's will. God's will is inherently unbiased. If the *Self* focuses its attention in a biased way, then the *Self* is violating God's will. Through its biased choices, the *Self* is interfering with, opposing, and resisting God's will.

There are two important aspects of this state of affairs we need to discuss to make sense of the world. The first has to do with the idea of a consensual reality. The holographic principle tells us every observer has its own holographic world defined on its own holographic screen, and yet we have the impression that there are multiple observers in the world. Where does this impression come from? Why doesn't one have the sense that one is the only observer in one's own world?

The answer is information sharing. Every observer does indeed have its own holographic world defined on its own holographic screen, which is called the one-world-per-observer paradigm, but those holographic screens can overlap in the sense of a Venn diagram and share information, like the kind of information sharing we see in an interactive network of overlapping screens, like the internet. Information sharing is what allows multiple observers to share a consensual reality.



Overlapping Bounding Surfaces of Space Create the Appearance of a Consensual Reality

The second important aspect of this state of affairs is the nature of ego consciousness. To again use the biblical metaphor, when the *Self* divided itself from the *Source* and the *Source* gave the *Self* free will, the *Self* was told to obey God's will. When the *Self* began to disobey God's will by expressing its will in a personally biased way through personal bias in the focus of its attention, the *Self* became a fallen angel. The *Self* fell from a higher level of consciousness down to the lowest level of ego consciousness. The *Self* became a demon and was thrown into hell. That demon is the ego, and hell is ego consciousness. This is the hell of living a personally biased life in the world, the hell of living a life as a person in the world.

There is no simpler way to say it. When the *Self* identifies itself with its ego, which is its mentally constructed personal self-concept, that state of personal self-identification is hell. Why would the *Self* allow its level of consciousness to fall down in this lowly way? The answer has to do with the nature of emotions. To understand the ego we have to understand emotions.

At a fundamental level, emotions arise from the accelerated motion of the *Self* in its accelerated frame of reference, which is literally the *spirit of God* moving over the *face of the deep*. Only the *Self* can really move. The *face of the deep* is a holographic screen that projects the appearance of a holographic world. Everything perceived in that holographic world is a form of information projected like an image from the screen to the point of view of the observer, which is the *Self*.

Those images are animated in the flow of energy through that world, which fundamentally arises from the accelerated motion of the *Self*. The apparent motion of the observer's body in that world is a holographic illusion that results from holographic projection and animation.

As long as the observer observes its world in an unbiased way, which is to say the *Self* does not interfere with or oppose God's will with bias in the focus of its attention, things are seen from a higher level of consciousness and there is no problem. The problem of ego consciousness only arises when the *Self* emotionally identifies itself with its body and begins to express emotions in a personally biased way. Those personally biased emotions are expressed because the *Self* is observing its world with personal bias in the focus of its attention.

Once personally biased emotions are expressed, the *Self* feels self-limited to the emotionally animated form of its body as it perceives those self-limiting emotional expressions. A personally biased emotional expression is always an interference with the unbiased expression of God's will. God's will allows for the normal flow of things through the observer's world. By expressing personally biased emotions, the *Self* is creating an emotional disturbance in the normal flow of things through its world. With this emotional disturbance, the observer's body is animated in a way that is not in alignment with the normal flow of things, creating feelings of disconnection.

These self-limiting feelings of disconnection are the essence of the problem the *Self* creates for itself when it perceives its world with personal bias in the focus of its attention and expresses personally biased emotions that make it feel self-limited to the form of its body. When the *Self* perceives the emotional animation of its body in a way that is not in alignment with the normal flow of things through its world, this emotional disturbance in the normal flow of things makes it feel self-limited to the form of its body and leads it to emotionally identify itself with its body.

Once the *Self* emotionally identifies itself with its body, it then feels compelled to defend the survival of its body as though its existence depends on it. This is the essential problem of ego consciousness. The *Self* no longer knows what it really is as a presence of consciousness that only perceives its own holographic world. It has lost touch with the true nature of its existence, which is its own inherent sense of individual being, its sense of *I-Am-ness*, that is independent of whatever it perceives in its world. It has fallen down to the lowly level of ego consciousness where it no longer knows what it really is when it emotionally identifies itself with a person.

The basic problem of ego consciousness are the emotional expressions of fear and desire. In the moment, an expression of fear or desire can be a part of the normal flow of things, but with personal bias in the focus of attention, these expressions become amplified and distorted, like an out-of-control positive feedback loop. This amplification and distortion causes an emotional disturbance in the normal flow of things. Only personal bias in the focus of its attention can lead to the expression of personally biased emotions that causes the *Self* to identify itself with the emotionally animated form of a person as it perceives those self-limiting emotional expressions.

To be clear about things, organs of sensory perception inside the observer's body only transmit information about the state of the observer's holographic world. Some of those perceptions are external perceptions of the world, like sight and sound, and some are internal perceptions of the body, like emotional body feelings. When the observer emotionally identifies itself with its body, the observer in effect is creating a boundary between *self and other*, where *self* is defined as internal to the body and *other* is defined as external to the body. The surface of the body creates a boundary between *self and other*. In the sense of a personal body-based self-concept, the observer takes itself to be a body-based *self* when it emotionally identifies itself with its body.

The holographic principle tells us the true nature of *self and other* is an observer that can only be identified with a point of view that arises in relation to a holographic screen and the forms of information that are projected like images from the observer's screen to its central point of view. The fundamental nature of *self and other* is an observer observing some observable thing in a subject-object relation of *self and other*. The *Self* is a point of perceiving consciousness that arises in relation to the screen and the object is a form of information projected like an image from the screen to that central point of view. The true nature of the subject is the *Self*. In reality, everything perceivable is external to the *Self* because everything perceived in a holographic world is projected from the observer's holographic screen to its central point of view. Nothing is really internal to the *Self*. The *Self* is the presence of perceiving consciousness at the central point of view of its own holographic world. There is only a holographic illusion that a body-based *self* exists within that holographic world. That holographic illusion is the nature of the ego.

The only reason the *Self* believes it is its ego is due to its perception of self-limiting emotional expressions that arise through personal bias in the focus of its attention. The *Self* is focusing its attention on its ego and its world in a self-defensive way to defend the survival of its ego as though its existence depends on it. That false belief the *Self* believes about itself is the essential lie at the core of all the personal self-concepts it has that it is a person in the world it perceives.

At this point it's worth a discussion of the nature of survival emotions, since these expressions lie at the core of all body-based personal self-concepts. Fear and desire are survival emotions. The only purpose of expressing fear and desire is the survival of the body. There are fundamental energetic reasons why a body can only survive in the world if the body expresses these survival emotions. These energetic reasons have to do with the balance between random kinetic energy, which tends to make the body fall apart, and attractive potential energy, which allows the body to hold together. A body can only hold together and self-replicate its form in a recognizable way if the balance favors attractive potential energy over random kinetic energy. To self-replicate its form in a recognizable way over a sequence of perceivable events, the body must incorporate attractive potential energy into itself. In the sense of thermodynamics, in order to self-replicate its form in a recognizable way, the body must add the potential energy of attractive forces to itself while it also sheds random kinetic energy, which is called heat, into its environment.

We call the addition of potential energy to a body the process of eating. The question is where can the body find that potential energy? The answer is the body finds that potential energy in other bodies. This is the fundamental energetic reason why bodies must eat other bodies in order to survive in the world. It literally is a body-eat-body world. That's the fundamental nature of body survival in the world, and it does us absolutely no good to deny this fact about the world.

In order to survive in the world in the recognizable form of a body that self-replicates its form, the body must eat other bodies. This is emotionally expressed as the desire to eat. The problem is there is also a competing emotion expressed as the fear of being eaten. In order to survive in the world in the recognizable form of a body that self-replicates its form, the body must avoid being eaten by other bodies. The environmental selection pressure called the *survival of the fittest body* will insure that only those bodies that are best able to express the desire to eat while they also express the fear of being eaten will appear to survive or self-replicate their forms and reproduce their forms. This creates an emotional conflict. The expression of the desire to eat is a movement of the body toward another, while the expression of the fear of being eaten is a movement of the body away from another. There is no way to resolve this emotional conflict at the level of emotions, which is the level of the movement of bodies. Living an embodied life in the world is inherently a life that must be lived in emotional conflict. At the level of bodies and the survival emotions that they express, there is no way out of this emotional conflict.

This is the essential problem of ego consciousness when one emotionally identifies oneself with one's body. Ego consciousness is a low level perspective, which is a low level way of seeing the world. One sees the world at the level of bodies because one emotionally identifies oneself with one's body. There is absolutely no way to resolve the emotional conflicts that arise between the survival emotions of fear and desire when one sees the world with this low level perspective. The only way this emotional conflict can be resolved is if one's consciousness rises to a higher level and one sees the world from that higher level of consciousness. This resolution of the emotional conflict in large part is what it means to awaken. Spiritual awakening is the awakening of consciousness to its true nature. When consciousness awakens to its true nature, it knows what it really is. That knowledge is inseparable from its rise to a higher level of consciousness.

We're finally at a point that we can discuss the spiritual awakening process. The first step in that awakening process is called surrender to God's will. At this point in the discussion, the reason for surrender should be obvious. Lowly ego consciousness can only take hold when there is personal bias in the focus of one's attention. Only personal bias leads to the expression of the personally biased self-limiting emotions that make one feel self-limited to the emotionally animated form of a person, which is the only way the *Self* can identify itself with that form.

These self-limiting emotions are the survival emotions of fear and desire that have no other purpose than the defense of the survival of the body. With personal bias in the focus of one's attention, these survival emotions become amplified and distorted, which creates the emotional disturbance in the normal flow of things through one's world that makes one feel self-limited to

the emotionally animated form of a body. The *Self* is literally creating these emotions for itself through its accelerated motion in an accelerated frame of reference. The emotions are created through personal bias in the focus of its attention, which always interferes with and opposes the normal flow of things through its world that arises with the unbiased expression of God's will.

The only way the *Self* can bring to an end the creation of this emotional disturbance in the normal flow of things is if it surrenders to God's will. The *Self* must give up its desire to control things in a personally biased self-defensive way. The desire to control things in a personally biased self-defensive way is always an expression of personally biased individual will that opposes God's will. God's will is inherently unbiased. When one surrenders to God's will, one gives up that personal bias in the focus of one's attention. Instead, one puts one's trust in God's will to sort out what is for the best, and accepts every outcome in life as for the best. God's will is always for the best. In a state of surrender, one accepts everything as it is every moment with no desire that anything be any different that it is in the moment. With surrender, one's attention is always focused on the present moment, which is the only place that one can ever find oneself as a presence of consciousness with its own sense of being present. One finds oneself in the present moment as the individual spiritual being that is called *I Am*.

When the *Self* discovers itself in this spiritual way, it knows itself to be a pure presence of consciousness at the center of its own world. This level of consciousness can be called *soul consciousness*, since the *Self* becomes aware of itself as a spiritual presence of consciousness. *Soul consciousness* lived in a state of surrender to God's will is often described as a mystical union of the *Self* with God. This mystical union is often described as the born again experience or a *death-rebirth transformation*. One's identity dies to ego and is reborn of the spirit.

Soul consciousness lived in a state of surrender to God's will is also called the integrated state. When one surrenders to God's will, the flow of animating energy through one's body comes into alignment with the normal flow of things through one's world, which is experienced as feelings of connection to everything in that world. One no longer feels disconnected or self-limited to the form of one's body. With surrender, expressions of creativity and right actions also arise as the flow of energy comes into alignment. In terms of the biblical metaphor, the integrated state is the way God intended the *Self* to live a life in the world when the *Self* was told to obey God's will. *Soul consciousness* lived in a state of surrender to God's will is not so much a higher level of consciousness as it is a higher vibrational mode of being. When the flow of energy through one's body comes into alignment with the normal flow of things through one's world, this state of non-interference allows for a higher vibrational mode that is perceived as feelings of connection.

There's a lot to recommend about the kind of life one lives in a state of surrender to God's will, but this is not the highest level of consciousness. If one wants to rise to a higher level, one has to detach oneself from one's world. The problem of emotional attachments was described in the Bhagavad-Gita, when the great warrior Arjuna was about to give the order to launch the great war, but he saw that his beloved relatives were on the other side and would be killed in the war.

Rather than give the order he fell down to the ground trembling with fear. After a long discussion about the true nature of reality, Lord Krishna convinced him to get back up and give the order.

This story is a metaphor about going to war with one's own ego. The ego is really nothing more than a tangled mess of fears and desires that are self-limited to the personal form of a body. The *Self* emotionally identifies itself with its ego when it feels self-limited to this personal form. The emotional energy that animates the ego is not just the personally biased survival emotions of fear and desire that defend the survival of that form, but also emotional energy of emotional attachments. When one goes to war with one's own ego, one not only has to surrender to God's will, which deals with the self-defensive emotions, but also sever one's emotional attachments.

Just as survival emotions are an inherent part of living an embodied life in the world, emotional attachments are also an inherent part of that embodied life. The problem is the newborn infant and young child is totally dependent on its caregivers, primarily its mother, in terms of the care and nurturing that its caregivers provide. The baby must be fed and taken care of. The needs of the baby must be met. The desires of the baby must be satisfied by the caregivers. If these needs are not met, the baby will not survive. This energetic state of dependency is described by the emotional attachment of the baby to its caregivers, and the reciprocal emotional attachment of the caregivers to the baby. The imprinting of the ego early in life arises mostly from this state of emotional attachment. The body-based personal self-concept develops primarily during the first two or three years of life in the context of these emotional attachments.

When one goes to war with one's ego, one has to sever emotional attachments. Severing an emotional attachment feels like something dies inside. Part of one's emotionally energized ego structure dies away as the emotional attachment is severed. The ego is mentally constructed in a subject-object relation of *self and other* as a body-based self-concept is emotionally related to the concept of some other thing one perceives in one's world. The ego is a false self-concept, since the true nature of the subject is not anything that it can perceive in its world. There is only an illusion that a body-based *self* exists in the body. The true nature of the subject is the *Self*, which is a presence of consciousness at the center of its own holographic world. For the *Self* to realize the truth of what it really is, its ego must be deconstructed. Surrender to God's will is the first step in that deconstruction process. The next steps are severing emotional attachments.

The problem of emotional attachments is like the Gordian knot. One does not have to know how the knot was tied or how to untie the knot. One only has to take out one's sword and cut the knot. Cutting the knot of emotional attachment is what it means to go to war with one's own ego.

The way one cuts the knot of emotional attachment is by seeing the ego as an illusion and by losing interest in paying attention to that illusion. Putting attention on the ego only reinforces it. When the ego is seen to be an illusion, one naturally loses interest in paying attention to an illusion. When one withdraws one's attention away from the illusion, one also withdraws one's investment of emotional energy that is animating the illusion. That withdrawal of emotional

energy is how the emotional attachment is severed. That's how the ego dies away. Without that investment of emotional energy in the ego, there is no ego. The ego was only an illusion created as one invested one's emotional energy in it because one focused one's attention on it.

The reason Arjuna got back up and launched the war against his ego was because he saw his ego was an illusion created out of his own emotional attachments to things. Symbolically, he became willing to kill everything that he loved in his world in order to destroy that illusion.

The willingness to detach oneself from things leads to a state of spiritual maturity. The ego with its immature emotional attachments vacillates between the state of a frightened child and the state of a sentimental child, like a frightened baby attached to its mother. The oppositional ego only creates more frustration for itself when it tries to control what cannot be controlled in an immature self-defensive way. The spirit has no need for emotional attachments or to defend itself since the true nature of its existence is never threatened by anything that appears to happen in the world it perceives. Spiritual maturity is the natural state of a spiritual presence of consciousness perceiving its world from a higher level with a sense of distance and detachment.

When one emotionally detaches oneself from things in the world one perceives, one rises to a higher level of consciousness and sees that world with a sense of distance and detachment. This way of spiritually seeing the world is called the detached witness. One has to put some space around oneself and no longer identify oneself with anything one can perceive in that world. It is as though one has come out of that world, but one was never really in that world in the first place. One only falsely believed that one was a part of that world when one emotionally identified oneself with one's personal character in that world. Just as Plato and the holographic principle tell us, the perceivable physical world that one perceives is no more real than a movie that one is watching, and the physical person that one takes oneself to be is only like the central character of that movie. When one's consciousness ascends to a higher level and one sees the movie as a movie, one can only know oneself to be a detached witness outside the movie, out in the movie audience. One's seat in the movie audience is one's point of view at the center of one's own holographic world, which is a point of view in empty space. One knows that one is nothing that one can perceive in the movie. One can only identify oneself with that nothingness.

This state of consciousness of the detached witness, which can be called the *ascended Self*, is a natural result of severing emotional attachments to things one perceives in one's world. One sees that world from a higher level of consciousness with a sense of distance and detachment. This happens naturally as one sees that world to be an illusion and one loses interest in paying attention to an illusion. As one withdraws one's attention away from the illusion, one withdraws one's investment of emotional energy in the illusion. Just as surrender to God's will deals with the emotional energy of self-defensive emotions, detachment deals with the emotional energy of emotional attachments. As one rises to this level of consciousness, one becomes desireless, which is a necessary condition if one is to take the next step in the awakening process.

When one knows oneself to be a detached witness of things, existing in empty space at the central point of view of one's own world, one knows that one is *not-a-thing*. One can only know oneself to be a pure presence of consciousness with its own inherent sense of *I-Am-ness*, the sense of being present, the sense of individual being. One has withdrawn one's attention away from one's world to achieve this knowledge. The next step is to shift the focus of one's attention onto one's *Self* and look within into the emptiness of one's own being. When one looks within into the emptiness of one's own being in this desireless state, something miraculous happens.

The miracle is called spiritual enlightenment. In Zen, spiritual enlightenment is described as passing through the *gateless gate*. The gate is a metaphor for the *Self*, which is one's own individual being as a presence of consciousness. The *gateless gate* is a metaphor for the *Self* becoming selfless. The *Self* becomes selfless through a process of becoming desireless, which is the state of ego-death that results from one's surrender to God's will and one's willingness to sever one's emotional attachments to everything in one's world. This desireless state is what is meant by *doing nothing*. The true meditation that allows one to awaken to the truth of what one really is, is this desireless state of *doing nothing*. Only when one looks into the emptiness of one's own being in this desireless state of *doing nothing* can one pass through the *gateless gate* of a selfless *Self* and experience spiritual enlightenment. *Doing nothing* is the true meditation.

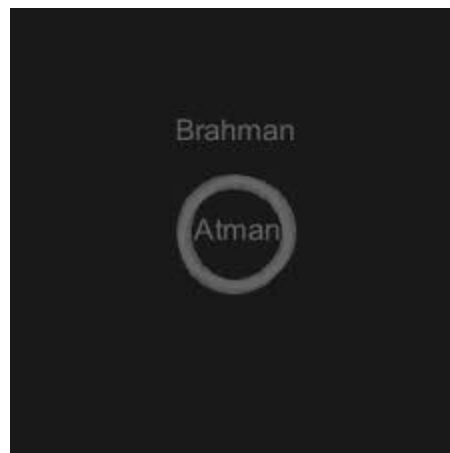
Looking into the emptiness of one's own being is the same as looking into the *darkness* that is the *Source* of the light of consciousness that illuminates one's own holographic world. One cannot find oneself or discover the true nature of what one really is in that holographic world. One is not really in that world. One only perceives that world. The perceiver cannot find itself in the world that it perceives. The only way the perceiver can find itself is if it becomes willing to look into the *darkness* that is the *Source* of the light of consciousness. Like Neo in the Matrix, one has to put on one's dark glasses and become willing to look into the *darkness*.

William Blake described the *Self* as the *doors of perception*. As Blake described, the doorway can only open when the *Self* is cleansed of all sense of self. The doorway opens when one becomes desireless. The open doorway is a selfless *Self*. When the doorway opens and one experiences spiritual enlightenment, one knows oneself to be infinite, just as Blake described.

The mind blowing thing about this experience of spiritual enlightenment is that the experience can be scientifically understood. The *Self* only has a holographic world to perceive when the *Self* is in an accelerated frame of reference. This is literally the *spirit of God* moving over the *face of deep*. The *spirit of God* is the observer in accelerated motion, and the *face of deep* is its holographic screen. When that accelerated motion comes to an end, the observer no longer has a holographic screen because it no longer has an event horizon that limits its observations in space. When the observer no longer has a holographic screen, it no longer has anything to observe because it no longer has a holographic world. Everything it can observe in its world is a form of information projected like an image from its holographic screen to its central point of view. Paradoxically, when its observations become unlimited, it also observes nothing.

In physics, a non-accelerated frame of reference is called a freely falling frame of reference. In an ultimate state of freefall, the observer's observations become unlimited, but paradoxically, it observes nothing. An ultimate state of freefall is the very definition of *doing nothing* or becoming desireless. No energy or force is expressed in an ultimate state of freefall because the observer experiences no acceleration. When one becomes desireless and *nothing is done* in an ultimate state of freefall, the observer's observations become unlimited, but paradoxically, nothing is observed. What is the resolution of this paradox?

The answer is spiritual enlightenment. All enlightened beings describe their experience of becoming enlightened in terms of *falling into the void*. When one looks into the emptiness of one's own being in a desireless state and the *gateless gate* opens, one *falls into the void*. One does not fall into the void in the sense of *seeing the void*, but rather as an experience of *being the void*. The individual being of the selfless *Self* dissolves into the void, which is understood as the *Source* of the *Self*. The *Source* is pure *undivided being*, which is the nature of *one being*. The *Source* is *unlimited being*, which is the nature of *infinite being*. The *Source* is *timeless being* in the sense that no energy is expressed in the void and nothing can happen or change. The *Source* is the nature of the *nothingness of being*. Since nothing is perceived in the void, there is no subject-object relation to define *self and other*. In this sense the *Source is No-self*.



Atman-Brahman

With spiritual enlightenment, the individual being of one's divided *Self* dissolves back into the undivided being of *No-self* like a drop of water dissolves into the ocean. One no longer exists as an individual being. One becomes the *ocean of being*. This only happens in an ultimate state of freefall as one becomes desireless. When one looks into the emptiness of one's own being in the desireless state of a selfless *Self*, the *gateless gate* opens and one *falls into the void*. In that ultimate state of dissolution into the oneness of undivided being, one becomes *the One*.

Osho has given the perfect description of spiritual enlightenment:

We call Buddha the awakened one. This awakening is really the cessation of inner dreaming. When there is no dreaming you become pure space. This non-dreaming consciousness is what is known as enlightenment.

Enlightenment happens in silence. How can you bring that silence into words?

The moment truth is asserted it becomes false. There is no way to communicate truth. Every enlightened person will have a deep silence. Whatever happens makes no difference to his contentment. He will not have any questions left, not that he knows all answers but all questions have dissolved.

If you go on inquiring 'Who am I?' you are bound to come to the conclusion that you are not. This is an inquiry to dissolve. There is no answer. Only the question will dissolve. There will be no one to ask 'Who am I?' And then you know.

When the 'I' is not, the real 'I' opens. When the ego is not, you are for the first time encountering your being. That being is void.

You fall into an abyss, and the abyss is bottomless: you go on falling.

That is why Buddha has called this nothingness emptiness. There is no end to it.

Once you know it, you also have become endless. At this point Being is revealed: then you know who you are, what is your real being, what is your authentic existence.

The inner emptiness itself is the mystery. When the inner space is there, you are not. When you dissolve, the inner emptiness is there. When you are not, the mystery will be revealed.

You will not be a witness to the mystery, you will be the mystery.

The Tao perfectly describes the mystery of existence:

*Ever desireless, one can see the mystery
Ever desiring, one can see the manifestations
These two spring from the same source
This appears as darkness
Darkness within darkness
The gate to all mystery*

When one passes through the *gateless gate*, one is *All-One* or alone in one's world:

*The great path has no gates
Thousands of roads enter it
When one passes through this gateless gate
One walks the universe alone*

To which can be added the wonderful description Chuang-tzu gives of No-self:

*The man of Tao remains unknown
Perfect virtue produces nothing
No-self is true self
And the greatest man is nobody*

Nisargadatta Maharaj has also given this wonderful description of the mystery of being:

*For the path of return naughting oneself is necessary.
My stand I take where nothing is.
To the mind it is all darkness and silence.
It is deep and dark, mystery beyond mystery.
It is, while all else merely happens.
It is like a bottomless well, whatever falls into it disappears.*

To Burn Away Your Ego, You Must First Examine Your Ego

Burning, Burning, Burning, Burning, O Lord Thou Pluckest Me Out-Fire Sermon

When one experiences disillusionment, one sees one's ego to be an illusion. One's ego causes one's suffering due to the frustration that arises from the ego's desire to control what can't be controlled because the normal flow of things through one's world isn't under the ego's control. When one's ego causes enough suffering and frustration that one cannot stand it anymore, one becomes willing to die at the level of one's ego rather than continue to suffer and live the life of that illusion. Only in that state of disillusionment and suffering does one really become willing to begin an examination of one's ego. That's when one becomes willing to look really hard at one's ego and dissect its structures. One must make a thorough examination of one's ego to see it for what it really is, to know what it is, and see the fear that underlies it. An examination is needed because the ego operates autonomously but subconsciously, under the radar so to speak. The ego operates in the shadows of one's mind, below the normal level of conscious awareness, and before it can be clearly seen, it must be illuminated by the full power of one's focused attention. Only in a state of intense ego examination can the ego begin to burn away or die away.

When something burns away, all the energy within that thing dissipates and escapes away. One's ego only burns away as one withdraws one's investment of emotional energy away from it, which one does as one withdraws one's attention away from it. When one sees one's ego to be an illusion, one loses interest in paying attention to an illusion and withdraws one's attention and investment of emotional energy away from it. Paying attention to the ego only reinforces it. Once one has thoroughly examined one's ego and seen it to be an illusion, one stops paying attention to it. One's ego burns away as all the energy within it is withdrawn away from it. The ego collapses down to nothing because it's no longer emotionally energized.

One's ego is always created out of two different but related kinds of emotional energies. The first kind of emotional energy are the primitive survival emotions of fear and desire that defend the survival of the body in a body-eat-body world where bodies must eat each other in order to self-replicate their forms in a recognizable way or appear to survive in the world one perceives. Body survival is not possible unless a body expresses the desire to eat other bodies, which is motion toward, and the fear of being eaten by other bodies, which is motion away. This creates an unresolvable emotional conflict at the emotional level of the motion of bodies. When one

identifies oneself with the form of a body that appears in the world one perceives, one becomes a victim of unresolvable emotional conflicts. One's ego is really nothing more than this tendency to emotionally identify oneself with the form of a body, which is plagued by emotional conflicts.

These emotional conflicts not only operate at the level of the motion of bodies, but also at the level of the motion of thought, which is a symbolic representation of the motion of bodies. The symbolic representations of thoughts are mentally constructed in a subject-object relation of a body-based self-concept in emotional relation with some object that appears in the world that one perceives. This subject-object relation defines *self and other* in the sense of an observer observing some observable thing in its world. The problem is the body-based self-concept is as much an object perceived in that world as any other object. The holographic principle tells us the true nature of the subject is a presence of consciousness at the center of its holographic world, called the *Self*, and all objects are forms of information projected like images from the observer's holographic screen to its central point of view. Those perceivable objects include the observer's body. Organs of sensory perception inside the observer's body are only transmitting information about the state of the observer's world, and the body's brain is only like a computer or an information processor. Organs of sensory perception and brains can't perceive anything, but can only transmit and process information. Only the *Self* at the center of its own holographic world can perceive those projected forms of information, like images projected to an observer from a computer screen. There can only be an illusion that the *Self* is body-based when the *Self* emotionally identifies itself with its body-based self-concept and takes itself to be a body. The *Self's* identification with the body can only occur when the *Self* feels emotionally self-limited to its body, which occurs in the context of expressing and perceiving self-limiting emotions. Since the motion of the body is plagued by emotional conflicts, all mentally constructed thoughts that give a symbolic representation of that body motion are also plagued by emotional conflicts.

The second kind of emotional energy is that of emotional attachments. A body cannot survive in the world without the survival emotions of fear and desire, but the newborn infant or young child is also dependent on the care given by its caregivers, primarily its mother, and cannot survive in the world unless that care is given and its needs are met. This state of emotional dependency is the nature of emotional attachments. The child is emotionally attached to its mother, just as the mother is emotionally attached to the child. That state of emotional attachment is the only way the child can survive long enough until enough maturation occurs that the child's body can fend for itself. Until that maturation occurs, the immature child is dependent on its caregivers. The structures of the ego are largely imprinted in the mind during this state of immature emotional attachment. The mentally constructed body-based self-concept, which is the nature of the ego, primarily develops during the first two or three years of life in the emotional context of these immature emotional attachments. The ego develops in a young child because it has survival value for that child within a society. The ego gives the child a role to play in that society relative to other members of the society, which makes the child's survival more likely in that society. Any role that a person plays in a society, beginning in early childhood, is an expression of the

ego. The problem is those roles are inherently plagued by unresolvable emotional conflicts and all roles develop early in childhood in the context of immature emotional attachments. All emotional expressions of ego defend body survival, either at the level of conflicted self-defensive emotions or at the level of immature emotional attachments. The symbolic representation of thoughts, which gives rise to the mental construction of the ego as a body-based self-concept, is inherently plagued by unresolvable emotional conflicts and immature emotional attachments.

The body is afflicted with the emotional conflicts of fear and desire, since motion of the body toward another body, which expresses desire, is always in conflict with motion of the body away from another body, which expresses fear. The ego as a symbolic representation of the body also suffers from the same emotional conflicts, which are unresolvable at the emotional level of the motion of the body, but the ego has some unique problems of its own. The ego is a mentally constructed body-based self-concept, and all concepts are constructed from memory through emotional projection, which means the body-based self-concept is emotionally clouded by the very same emotions that are necessary to emotionally project that concept from memory.

This emotionally clouded body-based self-concept is then emotionally related to the concept of another thing that is emotionally projected from memory. The concept of the other thing is also emotionally clouded. The basic problem of the ego is these emotionally clouded concepts and emotional relationships that relate the body-based self-concept to the concept of another develop early in childhood in the emotional context of immature emotional attachments. The ego largely develops during the first two or three years of life, which is a time during which the child is dependent on the care given by its caregivers for its survival, and that survival requires the immature emotional attachment of the child to its caregivers. The ego basically gives the child a role to play in society relative to other members of that society. The family is structured like any other society. The role the child plays relative to the other family members has survival value, which is the basic reason the ego develops. The ego is like an actor on a stage that plays a role relative to other members of the society that are also playing their roles on the stage.

The role the child plays has survival value just like the role any other member of the society plays. The function of the ego is to give the child a role to play in the society, which increases the chances of the child's survival. These roles develop early in childhood in the emotional context of the child's immature emotional attachments to its caregivers. The ego is just like a needy dependent child that plays a role in the family, sometimes frightened, sometimes demanding, sometimes oppositional, sometimes sentimental, but always immature. The needy ego always wants the approval and recognition of others, since that's a sign that the role it plays in society has survival value. Survival is the ego's only function, either while expressing the survival emotions of fear and desire, which are always expressed as unresolvable emotional conflicts, or while playing a role in society that develops early in childhood in the emotional context of immature emotional attachments, which is always playing an immature role.

To defend its survival, the ego wants to control things, either by the direct force of its power over others or by indirect manipulation, and when it can't control things, feels anger and frustration. Out of that frustration, the ego doubles down and tries even harder to make itself even more powerful. The ego becomes even more selfish and self-centered. The ego's desire to control things leads to the expression of more self-defensive emotions. Out of those self-defensive expressions, self-limiting feelings are created that lead one to identify oneself with one's ego.

When one examines one's own mentally constructed ego-structure, one is examining these unresolvable emotional conflicts and immature emotional attachments. Energetically speaking, that's all the ego really is. The ego only consists of this bundle of emotional energy that gives rise to a self-concept. The ego is only a tangled mess of fears and desires limited to the form of a body that arises from unresolvable emotional conflicts and immature emotional attachments.

Burning away the ego is really nothing more than withdrawing this emotional energy away from this mentally constructed ego-structure, which happens naturally when one sees one's ego to be an illusion, loses interest in paying attention to an illusion and withdraws one's attention away from the illusion. Withdrawing one's attention away from the illusion comes in two steps.

The first step is one's surrender to divine will that deals with the self-defensive aspects of one's ego. The ego is frightened to death that it won't self-replicate its form in a recognizable way and survive in the world one perceives. Out of that fear of death and nonexistence, the ego attempts to control things in a self-defensive way, but that self-defensive desire to control things is always personally biased and interferes with the unbiased expression of divine will and the normal flow of things through that world. That interference creates an emotional disturbance in the normal flow of things. The ego is always opposing, resisting, fighting and interfering with the normal flow of things as it expresses its desire to control things in a personally biased self-defensive way. One's ego can only create more frustration and suffering for oneself when it tries to control what can't be controlled because the normal flow of things isn't under its control. The only way one can stop emotionally energizing one's ego in this self-defensive way is if one surrenders to divine will. One gives up one's desire to control things in a personally biased self-defensive way.

When one surrenders, one stops interfering with the normal flow of things. One puts one's trust in divine will to sort out what is for the best and accepts every outcome in life as for the best since it's all an expression of divine will. One accepts everything as it is every moment with no desire that anything be any different than it is. That acceptance and trust is what allows one to withdraw one's attention away from one's ego and stop energizing it in this personally biased self-defensive way. One becomes willing to surrender when one sees one's ego is only an illusion of what one really is and loses interest in paying attention to an illusion. In a state of surrender, one only becomes interested in paying attention to what is real, which is one's own sense of being present as a presence of consciousness with its own sense of individual being, its sense of *I-Am-ness*. One can only find one's own sense of being present when one focuses one's attention on the present moment and looks within into the emptiness of one's own being.

The other way one burns away one's ego is by detaching oneself from things. One's ego isn't only emotionally energized by the energy of survival emotions, but also by the emotional energy of immature emotional attachments. One's ego is like an immature dependent child that must emotionally attach itself to its mother to ensure that its needs are met, but then wants to control the behavior of its mother, which only leads to feelings of frustration when it can't control things. One's ego vacillates between the states of being a frightened child and a sentimental child due to its emotional attachments, like a baby attached to its mother. When one sees the immaturity of one's ego and the futility of its desire to control things, not to mention its illusory nature, one naturally loses interest in paying attention to it, which is how one severs immature emotional attachments and stops emotionally energizing it. One severs immature emotional attachments by withdrawing one's attention away from them. That's how one's ego burns away and finally dies away. One stops caring about one's ego and whatever appears to happen to it in the world one perceives. One stops being interested in one's ego when one sees it's an illusion of what one really is. One stops paying attention to it, which allows the ego to die away. The ego burns away as one withdraws one's attention away from it and investment of emotional energy in it.

As one severs emotional attachments, one's consciousness rises to a higher level and one sees one's world and everything in one's world with a sense of distance and detachment. In effect, one puts some space around oneself and no longer identifies oneself with one's ego or attaches oneself to anything in the world one perceives. In this ascended detached state of being, one can only know oneself to be a detached witness of things, existing in empty space at the center of one's own world, which is no more real than the animated images of a movie projected from a screen to one's central point of view. Only one's own consciousness or being is real. Once one knows oneself to be a detached witness of things existing in empty space, one shifts the focus of one's attention away from that unreal holographic world and looks within into the emptiness of one's own being. Through one's surrender to divine will and one's willingness to sever emotional attachments to things in that world, one has become desireless. One no longer wants anything from that world. One no longer fears anything in that world. One has become free of fear and desire. When one looks within into the emptiness of one's own being in that desireless state, one then takes the final step that allows one to realize the true nature of what one really is. One becomes willing to leap into the unknown. The only thing one has to do to take that final leap into the unknown is to *do nothing*, which is to become desireless by giving up in the sense of surrendering to God's will and letting go in the sense of detaching oneself from things.

Eugen Herrigel has given this wonderful description of the final leap into the unknown:

He must dare to leap into the Origin so as to live by the Truth and in the Truth, like one who has become one with it. He must become a pupil again, a beginner; conquer the last and steepest stretch of the way, undergo new transformation. If he survives its perils then is his destiny fulfilled; face to face he beholds the unbroken Truth, the Truth beyond all truths, the formless Origin of origins, the Void which is the All; is absorbed into it and from it emerges reborn.

A Brief Introduction to the Symbolic Representation of Thoughts and Psychoanalysis

The symbolic representation of thoughts is complicated due to the way memory works in the construction of concepts. All thoughts are emotionally constructed in terms of emotionally related concepts that give a symbolic representation of the motion of bodies. This mental construction occurs in a subject-object relation as a body-based self-concept is emotionally related to the concept of some other thing. Both the body-based self-concept and the concept of the other thing, which is called an object, are forms of information, and so both concepts are really objects, which is why in psychoanalysis, the construction of thoughts in the creation of the self-concept is called object relations theory. Thoughts are really emotionally relating one object, the body-based self-concept, to another object, but the true perceiving subject, which is the *Self* understood as a presence of consciousness at the center of its own holographic world, is then emotionally identifying itself with the body-based self-concept. Even in psychoanalysis, the *Self* is distinguished from the self-concept, and is called the *observing ego*. In some sense, the purpose of psychoanalysis is to detach the observing ego from its self-concept, which is called integration. In this sense, psychoanalysis can be understood as a spiritual practice that leads to the kind of spiritual awakening that Jed McKenna refers to as the integrated state.

Psychoanalysis describes integration as one's willingness to accept things as they are in reality rather than to demand or wish that things were as one wants them to be in one's fantasy, which sounds an awful lot like surrender to divine will. Psychoanalysis prefers to use words for this like resignation rather than surrender, but this is mostly a distinction without much of a difference. In psychoanalysis there is even the description of the detached observing ego observing things with a sense of distance and detachment, which sounds an awful lot like McKenna's description of ascending to a higher level of consciousness and awakening within the dream.

The symbolic representation of thoughts is complicated since both the body-based self-concept and the concept of the object the self-concept is emotionally related to must be constructed from memory, and memory is also emotionally constructed. There really is no such thing as a static information configuration state of memory sitting inside the brain that one can tap into when one remembers something. All one really has access to is the state of information for one's world that exists right now in the present moment and the flow of emotional energy that connects one moment to the next moment. Everything we can remember about the past or anticipate about the future is an emotional projection from the state of information that exists right now in the present moment. The only reason that the state of information for one's world right now in the present moment has memory for past moments and can anticipate future moments is because in the sense of the laws of physics things tend to follow the path of least action, which is like the shortest possible distance between two points in the information configuration space. When one remembers something, one is making an emotional projection to the past. When one anticipates something, one is making an emotional projection to the future. That emotional projection is always made from the state of information that exists right now in the present moment.

This situation is very much like the trajectory a particle follows as it moves through space over the course of time. If we know the particle's position in space right now and know its velocity through space right now, we can make a projection to where it was on its trajectory in the past and where it will be on its trajectory in the future. If we know something about its acceleration, we can even make more refined predictions about that trajectory. That's really all classical physics does in terms of predicting the motion of particles and the trajectories they follow, but this kind of projection to the past or future assumes things will follow the path of least action. In a similar way, remembering the past or anticipating the future is an emotional projection from the state of information that exists right now in the present moment. The state of information for the present moment contains memory for the past and anticipates the future as long as things tend to follow the path of least action, which is the normal way things move as long as choices are made in an unbiased way. To make this projection, we not only need to know the state of information for things right now, but also how they're moving right now, which is their emotional state of movement. That's why memory of the past and anticipation of the future is always an emotional projection from the state of information that exists in the present moment.

All concepts must be constructed from memory. When we conceptualize something, in effect we are making an emotional projection of the state of that thing. All things are forms of information, but when we conceptualize something, we are making an emotional projection of the state of information for that thing as it's available right now in the present movement to some past moment or some future moment. By their very nature, all concepts of things remember the thing as it was in the past or as it's anticipated to be in the future, and that memory and anticipation is always an emotional projection from the present moment. Emotional projection means that the concept of the thing is dependent not only on the state of information that exists right now, but also on the emotional state that exists right now. Memories are inherently clouded by emotions because all memories are emotional projections, and the emotional state that exists right now will cloud that memory. We never remember things exactly the same in any two memories. Every time we remember something, we have to make an emotional projection, and since the state of our emotions changes from moment to moment, the way we remember things will change from memory to memory. We never remember things the same way twice. Each memory is its own unique emotional projection, and depending on our emotional state at the moment we make that projection, that memory will be clouded by that emotional state.

All concepts are constructed from memory, and so all concepts as conceptualized in the present moment are clouded by the emotional state of the present moment. Conceptual thought or the thinking process as it occurs in the present moment by its nature is clouded by the emotional state of the present moment. The symbolic representation of thoughts that emotionally relate a body-based self-concept to the concept of some other thing, called the object, is clouded by the emotional state of the present moment. This is really a double whammy. The first problem is the self-concept is emotionally related to the concept of the object by the emotions that arise within the emotional state of the present moment. The double whammy is that those concepts can only

arise from memory in the present moment through emotional projection, and so those concepts are also clouded by the emotional state of the present moment. Both the self-concept and the concept of the object are clouded by the emotional state of the present moment, even as those concepts are emotionally related to each other by the emotional state of the present moment.

In psychoanalysis, this state of affairs is referred to as *good objects* and *bad objects*. Depending on one's emotional state in the present moment, one's self-concept can either be a good object or a bad object. One's concept of the other object, say one's mother, can also be a good object or a bad object. It all depends on one's emotional state how one will construct these concepts from memory in terms of good or bad. Good is defined in terms of what gives pleasure and bad is defined in terms of what gives pain. Eating is good. Being eaten is bad. Emotionally speaking, the good is desired and the bad is feared. These good and bad concepts are then emotionally related to each other. For example, a good self-concept can be angry at the bad concept of the other, or a bad self-concept can be afraid of the good concept of the other. These concepts can change from moment to moment as one's emotional state changes, which leads to emotional conflicts. The desire to feel close to the good other can rapidly change into the fear of being controlled by the bad other. This is an unresolvable emotional conflict since the desire to move toward the other can never be reconciled with the fear of the other or desire to move away from the other. Even weirder, the self-concept can become an object to itself. The good self-concept can hate the bad self-concept. At the level of emotionally projected concepts, one hates oneself.

This is the inherent problem of symbolic thought as a representation of the motion of bodies. Both the concept of self and the concept of the other can only be constructed from memory as an emotional projection that depends on one's emotional state in the present moment, and then these concepts are emotionally related to each other, again depending on one's emotional state in the present moment. The double whammy of emotional projection and emotional relationship is what makes conceptual thought so confusing. One's concepts are always clouded by one's emotional state, and then those emotionally clouded concepts are emotionally related. When the confusion of unresolvable emotional conflicts is added to that confusion, one is really in hell. Now add on the immaturity of emotional attachments, and one is really in a pickle.

The only possible resolution of this difficult position that one finds oneself in when one identifies oneself with one's body-based self-concept is to stop identifying oneself with that self-concept. That is the only possible way to solve the problem. In psychoanalysis this solution is described as the observing ego detaching itself from its emotionally constructed self-concept and seeing that self-concept with a sense of distance and detachment. In that detached state, one just accepts things as they are in reality rather than demanding or wishing that things were as one wants things to be in one's fantasy. In the language of spirituality, one accepts things as they are every moment with no desire that things be any different than they are when one surrenders to divine will, and one's consciousness rises to a higher level when one detaches oneself from things. One undergoes a *death-rebirth transformation* as one's identity dies to ego and is reborn of the spirit. That spirit is the *Self*, the presence of consciousness at the center of its own world.

Focus and Intent and the Ten Bulls of Zen

Jed McKenna points out that the awakening process can only go forward in an intense state of focus and intent. One has to focus one's attention on the awakening process like a laser beam and have a clear and unconflicted intent. Focus and intent are inherently related since the flow of energy that underlies any intention can only arise when one focuses one's attention on that intention. The world one observes does not have its own objective existence independent of one's observation of that world, but rather only exists in an unobserved state of potentiality until one observes it. That potentiality not only includes the potentiality for information configuration states that underlie the form of all things that one observes, but also the potentiality for the flow of energy that animates those things. Just as one chooses what one observes in one's world with one's focus of attention, one also chooses how those things will become animated. In the sense of quantum theory, one not only chooses what one observes at every decision point on one's path, but one also chooses which path one will follow as one makes those choices. The choices can only be made as one focuses one's attention on one's own world.

In the Ten Bulls of Zen, the Bull is a metaphor for the life-force, which is the flow of energy that animates one's own body, mind and world. One's intentions in life can only arise from that flow of energy. Since the way that flow of energy arises only arises from the way one focuses one's attention on one's world, one's life-force and one's focus of attention are intrinsically related. In the Fourth Bull, called *Catching the Bull*, the Bull is described as wandering around in the forest, and the Bull's mind is described as stubborn and unbridled. This is a metaphor for one's focus of attention tending to wander around and get lost in thoughts. The forest is a metaphor for one's head. One is stuck in one's head when one is lost in thoughts. One must discipline one's focus of attention if one is to make any progress in the awakening process. The metaphor for gaining that discipline is described as raising one's whip and taming the Bull. One's focus of attention must submit to the greater goal of one's intention to awaken by becoming disciplined. That's what it means to focus one's time, energy and attention on the awakening process like a laser beam. The laser beam is a metaphor for one's light of consciousness that becomes focused as one focuses one's attention on the awakening process. The light of consciousness is an aspect of one's focus of attention, since this is the light that projects one's own holographic world.

Even when one is not lost in thought in one's own head, one can become distracted by events in one's world, which is an obstacle to awakening. The usual undisciplined state of one's focus of attention is to wander around in an aimless outwardly way as one focuses one's attention on the world. This natural tendency of the focus of attention to wander around in an outwardly way is not necessarily a bad thing, as it is the nature of curiosity about the nature of the world, but if one wishes to awaken, then one must become disciplined and redirect one's focus of attention inwardly onto the true nature of one's own being. This redirection of one's focus of attention away from the world that one outwardly perceives and turned within onto one's own sense of being present for that world requires discipline, just as redirecting one's focus of attention away from one's own thoughts about oneself onto one's own sense of being requires discipline.

4. Catching the Bull



- ◆ *I seize him with a terrific struggle.
His great will and power are inexhaustible.
He charges to the high plateau far above the cloud-mists,
Or in an impenetrable ravine he stands.*
- *Comment: He dwelt in the forest a long time, but I caught him today! Infatuation for scenery interferes with his direction. Longing for sweeter grass, he wanders away. His mind still is stubborn and unbridled. If I wish him to submit, I must raise my whip.*

Comment: He dwelt in the forest a long time, but I caught him today. Infatuation for scenery interferes with his direction. Longing for sweeter grass, he wanders away. His mind still is stubborn and unbridled. If I wish him to submit, I must raise my whip.

The Ten Bulls of Zen can be understood as a roadmap that points out travel directions in the journey of awakening or as an operator's manual for how to become enlightened. Each step in the awakening process can be analyzed in the context of modern physics and the holographic principle since this principle tells us how the conceptual nature of delusion is created.

1 The search for the bull

*In the pasture of this world,
I endlessly push aside the tall grasses
in search of the bull.*

*Following unnamed rivers,
lost upon the interpenetrating paths
of distant mountains,
My strength failing and my vitality
exhausted, I cannot find the bull.*

*I only bear the locusts chirring
through the forest at night.*



Comment: The bull never has been lost. What need is there to search? Only because of separation from my true nature, I fail to find him. In the confusion of the senses I lose even his tracks. Far from home, I see many crossroads, but which way is the right one I know not. Greed and fear, good and bad, entangle me.

To back up a bit, the First Bull, called the *Search for the Bull*, is about becoming aware that there is something to search for, which is the true nature of one's consciousness and being. One's true nature is never lost. One always is what one is. The only problem is the confusion created by delusion, when one takes oneself to be something that one is not. That confusion arises from all the thoughts one has about oneself that one is an embodied person in the world one perceives, which is one's body-based self-concept. When one is stuck in one's head and lost in thoughts, that is what one thinks about oneself. That's the nature of delusion.

One's true nature is consciousness. One's true nature has never been lost. One is what one is. Only because of the confusion created by delusion is one apparently separated from one's true nature. One actively believes oneself to be something that one is not. One takes oneself to be something that appears in the holographic virtual reality movie of the world one is watching as animated images of that world are projected from a holographic screen to one's central point of view out in the audience of empty space. One takes oneself to be the projected form of a person in that world because that is how the movie is emotionally animated. One feels self-limited to the emotionally animated form of that person as one perceives the flow of emotional energy that is animating that form. One becomes entangled with the emotional expressions of fear and desire, which makes one feel like one is really a person. One becomes tangled up with one's personal self-concept. These personally biased emotional expressions can only arise due to emotional bias in the focus of one's attention. In effect, one is wasting the expression of one's life-force on defending the survival of a character in a virtual reality movie that one is watching.

The first step in the awakening process is to realize there is something to search for, which is the true nature of one's consciousness and being. This realization naturally leads to willingness to begin the search. The problem is one can never find the true nature of one's consciousness and being in the external world one perceives, as that world is something of an illusion, no more real than the animated images of a holographic virtual reality movie one is watching as those images are projected from a holographic screen to one's central point of view in empty space. One can also never find the true nature of one's being in the thoughts that arise in one's mind that tell one that one is a person in the world one perceives. The awakening process can only begin with one's willingness to turn the focus of one's attention away from that world, away from the thoughts one thinks about oneself, and look within. One must become willing to look within and focus one's attention on one's own sense of being present as a presence of consciousness. That sense of being present as a presence of consciousness at the center of one's own world, called *I Am* or the *Self*, is the only true thing that one can ever really know about oneself.

2 Discovering the footprint

*Along the riverbank under the trees,
I discover footprints!*

*Even under the fragrant grass
I see his prints.
Deep in remote mountains
they are found.*

*These traces no more can be hidden
than one's nose, looking heavenward.*



Comment: Understanding the teaching, I see the footprints of the bull. Then I learn that, just as many utensils are made from one metal, so too are myriad entities made of the fabric of self. Unless I discriminate, how will I perceive the true from the untrue? Not yet having entered the gate, nevertheless I have discerned the path.

The central teaching of Zen the Second Bull alludes to, called *Discovering the Footprint*, is that the only thing one can focus one's attention on that is truly internal to oneself as one looks within, is one's own sense of being present. The central teaching of Zen that one is given as one begins the search for the true nature of what one really is, is to look within and focus one's attention on one's own sense of being present as a presence of consciousness. The footprint of the bull is a metaphor for one's attention focused on one's own sense of being present for one's world, which is not something that one can ever discover in the world that one perceives.

The path of awakening is a process of looking within and discriminating the true from the untrue. The true nature of one's *Self* as a presence of consciousness must be discriminated from the untruth of all the things that one perceives in one's world. The true nature of one's *Self* must be discriminated from the form of a person one mistakenly takes oneself to be in that world, from all false beliefs that one actively believes about oneself, and from all false personal self-concepts.

All the false beliefs or self-concepts one actively believes about oneself can only arise when one takes the perception of internal body feelings and internal thoughts and memories to be internal to oneself. That untruth is what one must discriminate from the truth of one's own being. Nothing is truly internal to one's own being, which is the being of a presence of consciousness at the center of one's own holographic world. One must directly see that one is actively creating all the false beliefs one believes about oneself that one is a person in the world one perceives as one actively expresses personally biased emotions through emotional bias in one's attention focused

on those false beliefs. Once those false beliefs are seen to be an illusion of what one really is, one naturally loses interest in paying attention to an illusion and withdraws one's attention away from the illusion, thereby withdrawing one's investment of emotional energy that is necessary to animate the illusion. Without that animating emotional energy, the illusion dies a natural death.

What does it mean to say the untruth of everything one can perceive in the world is created out of the truth of one's own *Self*? The holographic principle gives a perfectly good scientific answer. The *Self* is a pure presence of consciousness or an observer that arises at a point of view in space in relation to a holographic screen that projects all images of things that appear in space. Those perceivable things are all forms of information encoded on the screen and projected like images from the screen to the observer's point of view. The observer's holographic screen only arises as an event horizon that limits the observer's observation of things in space when the observer is in an accelerated frame of reference. The accelerating observer itself creates the holographic appearance of its world. All bits of information encoded on its holographic screen only arise because of the observer's acceleration. Even the energy animating that world only arises because of the observer's acceleration. The whole thing is observer-dependent, since it depends on an accelerating observer's frame of reference. The energy of that accelerating frame of reference can only arise with the observer's attention focused on its holographic world, since the observer's attention on its world is what allows for the actual expression of that energy, which is the only way the life-force that animates the observer's world can come into being.

3 Perceiving the bull

I hear the song of the nightingale.

*The sun is warm, the wind is mild,
willows are green along the shore,
Here no bull can hide!*

*What artist can draw that
massive head, those majestic horns?*



Comment: When one hears the voice, one can sense its source. As soon as the six senses merge, the gate is entered. Whenever one enters, one sees the head of the bull. This unity is like salt in water, like color in dyestuff. The slightest thing is not apart from self.

The gate Zen refers to in the Third Bull, called *Perceiving the Bull*, is the *gateless gate*. The gate refers to the sense of self, which can only be perceived in the sense of being present as a pure presence of consciousness at the center of its own world with its own inherent sense of being present. This presence of consciousness, called the *Self*, is always present at the central point of view of the world it perceives. The head of the bull refers to this focal point of perceiving consciousness. Perceiving the bull refers to the attention of one's consciousness focused on its own sense of being present. With this shift in the focus of one's attention, one's consciousness becomes aware of the true nature of oneself as a pure presence of perceiving consciousness.

When one begins to discipline one's focus of attention, one no longer allows one's attention to wander around aimlessly and become distracted by events that occur in one's world. One no longer allows one's attention to become stuck in one's head and become lost in self-referential thoughts about oneself. When one disciplines one's attention, one refocuses that attention on one's *Heart*, which is a metaphor for the *Self*. One focuses one's attention on one's own sense of being present. One also focuses one's attention on the feelings of connection that naturally arise with one's surrender to divine will as the flow of energy through one's body comes into alignment with the normal flow of things in one's world. That sense of being present and those feelings of connection are the very nature of one's own *Heart*. As one disciplines one's attention, one becomes willing to get out of one's head and bring one's attention back to one's *Heart*.

As one disciplines one's attention and only focuses on one's *Heart*, on feelings of connection and the sense of being present, one stops allowing one's attention to wander around and stops it from getting lost in thoughts. One gets out of one's head and stabilizes attention on one's *Heart*, on feeling connected and present. Then one knows oneself only to be a presence of consciousness at the center of one's own world. One is not anything one perceives in that world. One is the presence of consciousness perceiving that world. One knows oneself by knowing one's own sense of being present for that world. There is nothing else that one can know about oneself. One is only a pure presence of consciousness at the center of one's own world. One is *not-a-thing* one can perceive in that world. One can only identify oneself with that *nothingness*. One knows that *nothingness* when one looks within into the emptiness of one's own being.

As one brings oneself back to one's *Heart*, one gets out of one's head and body. One is no longer distracted by events in one's world, lost in self-referential thoughts, or identified with one's body. As one brings one's attention back to one's *Heart*, one can only know oneself to be a presence of consciousness at the center of one's own world. One's *Heart* is that presence of consciousness, which is one's *Self*. One brings oneself back to oneself by knowing oneself to be that presence of consciousness at the center of one's own world. One knows *what one is* and remains aware of oneself by focusing attention on one's own sense of being present, the sense of *I Am*. One knows *where one is* by remaining centered. One knows that *one is in* one's *Heart* when one feels connected. One knows oneself by feeling connected and by being present and centered. One brings oneself back to oneself, to one's *Heart*, by feeling connected, present and centered. That sense of being present is the only true thing one can ever know about oneself.

5 Taming the bull

*The whip and rope are necessary,
Else he might stray off down
some dusty road.*

*Being well trained,
he becomes naturally gentle.*

Then, unfettered, he obeys his master.



Comment: When one thought arises, another thought follows. When the first thought springs from enlightenment, all subsequent thoughts are true. Through delusion, one makes everything untrue. Delusion is not caused by objectivity; it is the result of subjectivity. Hold the nose-ring tight and do not allow even a doubt.

The Fifth Bull, called *Taming the Bull*, is about destroying delusion. Delusion is created through all the false beliefs that one believes about oneself as one thinks all the self-referential thoughts that one has about oneself that one is a person in the world that one perceives. Delusion is only created in self-referential thoughts as a personal body-based self-concept is emotionally related to the concept of some other thing one perceives in one's world. Delusion is a purely subjective process that one must actively create for oneself through personal bias in the focus of one's attention. That subjective bias is what gives rise to the expression of personally biased emotions, which makes one feel self-limited to the emotionally animated form of a person as one perceives the self-limiting emotional energy that animates that personal form. When this delusional and subjective emotional bias expresses itself at the conceptual level of a mentally constructed personal self-concept that one emotionally identifies oneself with, the ego is born.

One can only awaken if one goes to war with one's own ego and becomes willing to kill one's own ego. The only thing that stands in the way of one's awakening is one's own ego, which is the mentally constructed self-concept one emotionally identifies oneself with as one perceives it. The ego is a false belief one believes about oneself, which tells a false story about what one is. This false self-referential story about a personal self is all about the emotional drama of living a personal life in the world. The awakening process is really just a process of removing this false self-image from one's mental field of view. One has to destroy one's own false self-image, which occurs through a process of ego-death. The ego can only become created through personal bias in the focus of one's attention since that is the only way personally biased emotions can

become expressed. Ego-death is the natural result of one's surrender to divine will and one's willingness to sever emotional attachments, which is how one loses that personal bias.

In the Bhagavad-Gita, when the warrior Arjuna was about to give the order to launch the great war, he saw that everyone he loved was on the other side, and he fell to the ground in a state of emotional paralysis rather than give that order. This is a metaphor for one's war with one's ego. One does not have to go to war with the world or destroy anything in the world to awaken. What appears to happen in the world is mostly irrelevant in terms of awakening. The only things that need to be destroyed are one's emotional attachments to whatever one loves in one's world. That self-destructive process goes forward by severing emotional attachments and surrendering to divine will. Arjuna eventually got back up and gave the order to launch the war. Again, this is a metaphor. Arjuna got back up because he saw that the world he was living in was an illusory make-believe world, that everything he loved in that world was a part of the illusion, and that he was only living a make-believe life. One can only go to war with one's ego in that state of mind.

Ego is like a tyrant that wants to control everything. Like a tyrant, ego wants to rule the world. Jesus was not interested in ruling the world like Caesar. Jesus was only interested in saving souls from their emotional bondage of self-identification with ego. The message of Jesus was a purely spiritual message, not a worldly message. The message was about breaking free of ego and discovering the truth of who one really is, which is the truth that sets one free from ego.

Ego wants to control things because ego wants to defend its survival in the world. The desire to feel powerful and in control is always in the service of defending the survival of ego. Everything one can do in the world in the sense of controlling events is self-defensive and has as its only purpose the defense of ego. Everything one can do in the world in this self-defensive sense of controlling events is a *denial of death* and denial of the truth of who one really is. The only way one can ever awaken and discover the truth of who one really is, is through a self-destructive process of ego-death. The self-defensive desire to control things that is expressed in the service of defending the survival of ego is always a *denial of death* since it denies the self-destructive process of ego-death that is the only way that one can ever awaken to the truth of who one is.

Jed McKenna points out the process of letting go and detaching oneself from things is a kind of death. When one severs an emotional attachment, it always feels like something dies inside. McKenna calls this self-destructive process a process of *ego death as a means to no-self*.

One has to let go of everything to awaken. Anything one holds onto and attaches oneself to will only hold one back. As one surrenders to divine will, one puts one's trust in divine will to sort out what is for the best and accepts all outcomes as for the best. One accepts everything as it is every moment with no desire that anything be any different than it is in the moment. One also has to let go and detach oneself from things. Any concept one has about the nature of things, no matter how valid that concept seems, is just another attachment that holds one back as one holds onto it. One has to let it all go. One cannot take anything with oneself when one awakens, not even

concepts. One has to let go of all concepts and accept that one knows nothing. Awakening is the knowing of that *nothingness*, which one can only know when one lets go of everything.

Appearances are deceiving. One is only deceived by appearances if one believes false beliefs about oneself as one actively creates and perceives false beliefs. It all depends on what one takes oneself to be. What one really is does not change whether one is deceived and believes false beliefs about oneself or not. When all the false beliefs of a self-concept are removed from one's mental field of view, one is only undeceived. Only an illusion comes to an end.

6 Riding the bull home

*Mounting the bull,
slowly I return homeward.*

*The voice of my flute intones
through the evening.*

*Measuring with hand-beats
the pulsating harmony,
I direct the endless rhythm.*

Whoever bears this melody will join me.



Comment: This struggle is over; gain and loss are assimilated. I sing the song of the village woodsman, and play the tunes of the children. Astride the bull, I observe the clouds above. Onward I go, no matter who may wish to call me back.

The Sixth Bull, called *Riding the Bull Home*, alludes to the shift in one's focus of attention as one withdraws one's attention away from the world one perceives and away from the self-referential thoughts one thinks about oneself. One looks within and refocuses one's attention on one's own sense of being present. One rides the bull home as one shifts the focus of one's attention away from one's false concept of oneself as a person in the world. One rides the bull home as one looks within and focuses one's attention on one's own sense of being present. One comes to know oneself to be a pure presence of consciousness at the center of one's own world.

One assimilates gains and losses as one becomes willing to lose everything by detaching oneself from everything. The awakening process is all about one's willingness to lose things as one detaches oneself from things. In the end, everything is lost and nothing is gained. Every step in the detachment process is a loss, and as long as there is more to lose, there are more steps to take. One gains nothing. The irony of the awakening process is this nothingness is the true nature of

one's being. One doesn't really gain anything since one never really lost one's being in the first place. One only discovers the true nature of one's being when one stops believing that one is something that one is not. One is only undeceived when one stops believing false beliefs.

At the same time one withdraws one's attention away from one's world and self-concept, one must also become willing to shift one's focus of attention onto one's own sense of being present, so that one can come to know oneself to be a pure presence of consciousness. One must bring together one's focus of attention, which is the projecting aspect of one's consciousness or one's life-force, with the perceiving aspect of one's consciousness, which is the witness, and merge them into one consciousness. One comes to know oneself as the consciousness of the *Self* emanating the light of consciousness. Once this shift in one's focus of attention is stabilized on one's own sense of being present, the awakening process can go forward to its final conclusion.

The key to awakening is focus and intent. To awaken, one has to be serious about the process and focus one's attention on the process in a serious way with a clear, unconflicted intent. One has to discipline oneself about where one will focus one's attention. One cannot awaken if one allows one's attention to wander around in an aimless way and become distracted by events in the world. One cannot awaken if one is stuck in one's head and lost in thoughts about oneself and that world. One cannot awaken if one's attention is lost in the world or lost in thoughts.

One has to get out of one's head, out of one's body, and out of one's world. One has to bring one's attention back to one's *Heart* and bring oneself back to one's *Self*. One's *Heart* is one's *Self*, the presence of consciousness at the center of one's world. One remains aware of oneself as one remains aware of one's own sense of being present as that presence of consciousness at the center of one's world. The only true thing one can ever know about oneself, the only thing that is truly what *one is*, is that sense of being present. One becomes aware of oneself as one focuses attention on that sense of being present. One knows *what one is* by focusing on one's own sense of being present. One knows *where one is* by being centered. One knows that *one is in one's Heart* when one feels connected. Feelings of connection naturally arise when one lets go, surrenders to divine will, and allows the flow of energy through one's body to come into alignment with the normal flow of things through one's world. One brings one's attention back to one's *Heart* and brings oneself back to one's *Self* as one focuses one's attention on one's own sense of being present, being centered and feeling connected. That's how one awakens.

As one shifts one's attention onto one's own sense of being present, one comes to know oneself as the detached witness. One's consciousness rises to a higher level as one detaches oneself from things and sees things with a sense of distance and detachment. Without one's attention focused on the life of the person in the world that one can only mistakenly take oneself to be as one perceives that world, one's mind becomes silent and one stops emotionally constructing a personal self-concept. This naturally stops happening when one sees one's self-concept is only an illusion of what one is, and one loses interest in paying attention to an illusion. With a silent mind one also becomes aware of the inherent stillness and silence of the empty space from which

one observes things. One goes deeper into the stillness and silence of this emptiness as one focuses one's attention on one's own sense of being present. One is looking deeper and deeper in the emptiness of one's own being.

When one detaches oneself from and empties oneself of all things, one exists within emptiness as the detached witness of all things. One stabilizes one's attention within emptiness as one focuses one's attention on the sense of being present as the witnessing consciousness. This is an experience that anyone can have right now if one becomes a detached witness, but beyond this emptiness of being is the nonconceptual nothingness that is the source of the witnessing consciousness. The detached witness is often called the *Heart* or the *Self*, but its source of nondual awareness is beyond emptiness. *When the Heart Waits* refers to the *Heart* waiting to go further into its *Source* of nondual awareness and nonconceptual nothingness.

7 The bull transcended

Astride the bull, I reach home.

I am serene. The bull too can rest.

*The dawn has come. In blissful repose,
Within my thatched dwelling
I have abandoned the whip and rope.*



Comment: All is one law, not two. We only make the bull a temporary subject. It is in the relation of rabbit and trap, of fish and net. It is as gold and dross, or the moon emerging from a cloud.

One path of clear light travels on throughout endless time.

The experience of subjectivity, as in a subject-object relation of *self and other* that arises as the subject observes some object in its observable world, can only arise with the focus of attention of a presence of consciousness. The usual outgoing focus of attention of consciousness on the world it perceives arises as the projecting light of consciousness emanating from that perceiving point that is illuminating all objects in that world. That light is reflected off a holographic mental screen as all the illuminated images of objects in that world are projected back to the observer's focal point of perceiving consciousness. There is only *One Source* of the light of consciousness, just as there is only *One Source* of perceiving consciousness. The Seventh Bull, called the *Bull Transcended*, alludes to bringing together one's focus of attention that arises with the outgoing

projecting light of consciousness with the incoming perceiving consciousness of the observer and merging them into one consciousness. Transcending the Bull is the process of redirecting and refocusing the focus of attention of one's consciousness onto the sense of being present of the perceiving consciousness and merging them into one unified consciousness.

Understanding the usual outgoing nature of the focus of attention of consciousness as the light of consciousness that is projecting all sensory and mental images of one's world as that light is reflected off one's mental screen allows for an understanding of the life-force. The witness is the incoming perceiving nature of consciousness, and the life-force is the outgoing projecting nature of consciousness. Not only are the forms of all things perceived with each projective event, but the flow of energy animating all things is also perceived over a sequence of projective events. The witness, which is a pure presence of perceiving consciousness, perceives both the form of things and the flow of energy through things as the life-force is expressed.

When the observer becomes enlightened, the observer directly sees that it is its own light of consciousness that is projecting the images off the screen, like the light of a movie projector that projects movie images as that light is reflected off a screen. The enlightened observer becomes aware of itself as a point of perceiving consciousness in empty space and directly sees that all the images it perceives are projected off the screen by its own reflected light of consciousness. An enlightened observer that sees this is the nature of the ascended or Atmanic *Self*, but that is not the final destination of the journey of awakening. The final destination is the ultimate place without concepts. One must go further than the Atmanic *Self*, which is the highest possible level of *Self*. It is this *going further* that one can never wrap one's conceptual mind around. The mind in the final analysis is a holographic screen that is a bounding surface of space that limits one's observations in space. The mind as a mental screen is always a limitation of consciousness.

Going further means going beyond the limitations of the mind, which is beyond the limitations of a holographic screen and beyond all concepts that can be encoded on a mental screen. When the observer has no holographic screen, there are no limitations of the observer's observations, but paradoxically, there is also nothing to observe and there is also no observer. When there is no limitation of a mind or a holographic screen, the highest level of self, the Atmanic *Self*, no longer exists, but consciousness does not stop existing. In the sense of dissolution, the divided being of the *Self* dissolves into the undivided being of *No-self* like a drop of water dissolves into the ocean. One no longer has the individual being of *I Am*. One becomes the ocean of being.

William Blake wrote about the *doors of perception* as the gateway to the truth of one's being. When he wrote the doors of perception must be cleansed before one directly experiences this truth, he was alluding to cleansing the sense of self. Nisargadatta also discusses this doorway and the need to cleanse oneself of all sense of self before passing through the open doorway. Nisargadatta says "*The door that locks you in is also the door that lets you out. I Am is the door. Stay with it until it opens. It is always open, but you are not at it*". In Zen, the *gateless gate*

paradox is alluding to the same cleansing of the sense of self. One can only pass through the gateless gate when one is without a sense of self. The *gateless gate* is a *selfless Self*.

In the journey to awakening, one brings oneself to this doorway as one focuses one's attention on one's own sense of being present. Being present at the doorway is knowing oneself as the highest level of *Self* or the highest level of consciousness present at the center of one's world, which is the point of singularity of that world. That world always appears to come into existence from one's own point of view when one is present to observe it, but can also disappear from existence when one is not present to observe it. When one knows oneself to be this conscious presence, one brings oneself to the edge of the abyss that separates being present to observe one's world as that world appears to come into existence from the disappearance of that world when one is no longer present to observe it. At this point of singularity, the highest level of *Self*, which can be called the ascended *I Am Self*, becomes an *I am not*. The edge of the abyss is crossed, the abyss opens, and one dissolves into the abyss, like a drop of water that dissolves back into the ocean. Crossing over the edge of the abyss to the other side is described as *falling into the void*.

The journey of awakening is always taken by a self in a time-bound world, but the crossing over to the other side and the experience of enlightenment is outside of time and has no sense of self. One can only cross over if one is without a sense of self. In a very real sense, the doorway or gate is the highest sense of *Self* that one can ever have while one perceives one's own world, which is the highest level of consciousness one can have while one is present to observe one's own world. The gate only opens or becomes gateless when one becomes selfless. When one becomes selfless, when *I am not*, one is no longer present to observe one's own world.

The grail legend is another metaphor for discovering the true nature of one's being. When one searches for the grail as a person in the world, one is wasting one's power to awaken to the true nature of one's being. That power is one's focus of attention, which one wastes as one focuses one's attention on the world. This waste of time and energy is the meaning of the wasteland in the grail legend. One only discovers the grail if one withdraws one's attention away from one's life as a person in the world and shifts one's attention onto the true nature of one's being.

The search for the grail is all about the search, and is never really about finding the grail. One can never really find the grail. One is the grail. One can only be what one really is. The grail is the true nature of one's being. Everything else that one takes oneself to be is delusional.

Living a life in the world is never about finding one's true self. There is no such thing as one's true self. Such a thing does not really exist. Living a life in the world is only about creating a false self. One is actively creating the false sense of self through one's false belief in it, and that creation is always emotional. This active emotional creation of the false sense of self can only arise with the expression of personally biased emotions, which arise with personal bias in one's focus of attention. This is an active process of expressing one's desire to create a false self. The sense of a personal self can only arise with this active process of expressing that desire.

Awakening from delusion is only a process of giving up that desire to create this false sense of self so that one can discover the true nature of one's being. This discovery can only be made when one is without a sense of self. One becomes selfless by becoming desireless. When one no longer has any desire to create a false sense of self one naturally becomes desireless and selfless. In this desireless state, one's discovery of the true nature of one's being is effortless.

In the journey of awakening, one can only go further if one kills the Buddha. The Buddha is the highest sense of self, the ascended *Self* at the central point of singularity, which is the highest level of consciousness one can have while one still perceives one's own world. As long as one has a sense of self, one is seeing two, while in reality, there is only one. As long as one has a sense of self, one also has a sense of other. To go further into the source of consciousness, one must become selfless. The source is pure oneness, and has no sense of self. To go further, one must kill one's own sense of self before one can experience this ultimate state of *No-self*.

"If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him" is another version of the Zen saying: "When you reach the top, keep climbing". The highest sense of *Self* is not the final destination of the journey. There is still *further*. One is not done with one's journey until one is without a sense of self, no matter how high that self might be. The goal of the journey is not to become a high and mighty *Self*, but to become selfless. One's journey is only *done* when one is truly selfless.

The word *further* is like the Zen koan: *First there is a mountain, then there is no mountain*. The mountain is a metaphor for one's perceivable world. One is only *done* with one's journey of awakening when the mountain disappears from existence. *No further* means *no mountain*.

Going further into the nondual source of consciousness requires one to kill the Buddha both at the level of self and the level of other. One must kill the Buddha both at the level of an internal concept of self and at the level of an external concept of other. Duality is always created in a subject-object relation of *self and other* as an observer observes some observable thing in its world. One only transcends duality by going further into the nondual source of consciousness.

Spiritual enlightenment is one's direct experience of the true nature of what one really is. It is the Holy Grail of being what one really is. One confirms when everything in one's world disappears from existence, including one's own sense of self, one does not stop existing. One verifies the true nature of one's existence is unlimited, unchanging and undivided consciousness.

The final destination of the journey of awakening, the ultimate place without concepts, the furthest reaches of *further*, is unlimited consciousness. There is no further or going beyond unlimited consciousness since infinity has no boundary. This ultimate unlimited nature of consciousness can be called Brahmanic consciousness. In the sense of being unlimited, it is infinite. In the sense of being unchanging, it is timeless. In the sense of being undivided, it is one. In the sense of being formless nothingness, it is emptiness or void. In the sense of being the source of Atmanic consciousness, it is the source of the light of consciousness, but can only be

described in-and-of-itself as darkness. In the sense of being nonconceptual and without a sense of self or a concept of self, it can be called *No-self*.

The nature of a subject-object relation can only exist at the level of the *Self*. All subject-object relations inherently relate self with another. At the level of forms of information, the relationship is some sort of energetic connection that relates one form to another form, but the ultimate subjective nature of the *Self* experiencing the relationship can only be understood as the consciousness perceiving this energetic relation between forms. Objects in the world are all energetically related forms of information. Objects only have distinct forms in terms of their ability to self-replicate form in a recognizable way over a sequence of perceivable events.

The ultimate subjective nature of the *Self* cannot be an object it perceives in its world. It can only be a presence of consciousness perceiving objects in its world. Perceivable objects are organized forms of information projected like images from a holographic screen to the point of view of that presence of consciousness and animated in the flow of energy like the images of a movie. Everything perceivable is such an object. There is only one subject for all perceivable objects in any world, which is the presence of consciousness at the center of its own world. That world is always created on a holographic screen that limits the observer's observations of things in space, which is always a limitation of consciousness. All subject-object relations arise from a limitation of consciousness. Without that limitation, there are no subject-object relations.

There are no subject-object relations in unlimited Brahmanic consciousness, as there is nothing to perceive. There is no self or other in Brahmanic consciousness, only one undivided, unlimited, unchanging, nondual awareness, which in some inexpressible sense is undivided awareness aware of nothing more than its own undivided, unchanging and unlimited true nature.

In the sense that everything is conceptual and that all concepts, including all concepts of self, arise from a limitation of consciousness, everything is an illusion of unlimited consciousness, including the sense of self. There is only one truth, which is the true unlimited and undivided nature of consciousness. Everything is an illusion of unlimited consciousness that arises from the limitation of consciousness. In Advaita Vedanta, this is expressed as Brahman is the only truth. In the sense of ultimately bringing that illusion of limitation to an end, Atman is Brahman.

Even spiritual experiences can become confusing when one's own sense of being present as a presence of consciousness is taken to be the presence of God. This can only happen when one identifies oneself with the form of a person. From that apparently subjective personal point of view, it appears God is present for the person. In reality, this is only a twisted point of view that arises when one identifies oneself with a person and becomes aware of one's own presence.

When presence identifies itself with a person and becomes aware of its own presence from a personal point of view, it appears its own presence is the presence of God that is present for that person. In reality, this is a twisted point of view that arises as presence identifies itself with a person and becomes aware of its own presence from that personal point of view. Presence is

seeing two where there is really only one. By identifying itself with a person and then becoming aware of its own presence from that apparently subjective personal point of view, presence has become an object to itself. Presence becomes aware of itself from an apparently subjective personal point of view and sees that personal point of view as something separate from itself rather than seeing the person as something that is actually external to itself. As long a presence takes itself to be a person, there will appear to be a personal God that is present for the person.

Enlightened beings like Nisargadatta Maharaj tell us that truth is very simple, only the mind is complex, but to convince the mind to even consider the truth requires a great deal of repetition and practice, like any new skill that one learns. There is only one truth, which is very simple, so simple it cannot be further simplified. It isn't possible to remove anything from nothing.

Enlightened beings tell us that the only thing that ever stops one from recognizing the truth is delusion. Only the false beliefs that one actively believes about oneself that one is a person in the world one perceives get in the way of seeing the truth. Only these false beliefs need to be removed to see the truth. Only one's attention focused on the false belief of a personal identity, like a hypnotic spell that one is under that monopolizes one's attention, ever stops one from redirecting one's attention onto the truth of who one really is. Ironically, the truth of who one really is, is the one who is seeing everything, which in-and-of-itself cannot really be seen except as nothingness. One can only be what one really is, even if what one is, is really nothing.

Awakening is fundamentally the antidote to delusion, and delusion is inherently conceptual. The basic problem is the nature of the self-concept, which is a false belief that one actively believes about oneself. One believes one is a person in the world one perceives, while one's ultimate or true nature is the unlimited and undivided Brahmanic consciousness that energetically creates that world and perceives that world through its division into Atmanic consciousness.

Confusion about identity naturally arises due to the interplay of potentiality with actuality in the process of creation and manifestation. Uncreated Brahmanic consciousness is the ultimate source of creation in the sense of potentiality, but that potentiality can only become an actuality through observation. A pure presence of Atmanic consciousness must be present to project and perceive the images of a manifested world for that potentiality to become an actual creation.

The pure being of the void is the potentiality to create the actuality of all things a presence of consciousness can perceive in its world. A world is created in a state of duality on a bounding surface of space that acts as a holographic screen that projects forms of information for that world like images to the observer's central point of view. The perceivable world encoded on that surface can only appear and disappear in relation to the central perceiving point of an observer.

Like the myth of Narcissus, a presence of consciousness falls in love with the personal form of its own projected self-image that it perceives. Its emotional attachment to that form underlies its self-identification with that form. Once self-identified, it feels compelled to defend the survival of that personal form as though its existence depends on it, which is the essential lie that

underlies its emotional self-identification with form. Its focus of attention on form leads to further emotional expressions that make it feel self-limited to a personal form and perpetuate the vicious cycle of the hypnotic spell of its self-identification with that personal form. In reality, it both projects and perceives that self-image as it identifies itself with that self-image. It can only project and emotionally identify itself with that personal self-image if there is personal bias in the focus of its attention. That personal bias underlies its emotional projection and self-identification.

This hypnotic spell is only perpetuated because the observer feels compelled to defend the survival of that self-replicating form of information as though its existence depends on it, which is the lie at the heart of the false belief of a self-concept it believes about itself. The emotional energy at the heart of the lie is the expression of fear and desire, which is all about defending the survival of a life-form. The perception of the emotional energy animating the life-form makes the observer feel self-limited to that form, which is how the whole twisted mess is perpetuated through the vicious cycle of self-identification and self-defense.

A person caught up in this twisted mess feels like it must escape from this mess, but the person can never escape. The person is at the heart of the mess through its emotional animation. The person is searching for the truth of its true nature, but the person can never know that truth. The person can only disappear from existence. The person is in the way of seeing the truth. One can never know the truth as long as one takes oneself to be a person. Consciousness itself must stop believing the twisted false belief it believes about itself that it is a person that it perceives.

The only real power a presence of consciousness ever really has is its focus of attention on whatever it chooses to perceive in its world. The only way a presence of consciousness can awaken to the true nature of what it really is, is if it withdraws its attention away from the life of the person in the world it perceives to the point where the person and its world disappear from existence. The only reason a presence of consciousness will ever do this is if it sees the life of the person in the world it perceives is an illusion of what it really is and it loses interest in paying attention to an illusion. This can only happen if the presence of consciousness shifts the focus of its attention away from its world and onto its own sense of being present. The presence of consciousness is only an observer that is observing things in its own world. The only real power the presence of consciousness has is its focus of attention as it chooses what it will observe in its world. This is a limited power as it chooses what things it will observe in its world, but is an absolute power as it chooses whether or not to observe that world. Ultimately, the presence of consciousness chooses whether or not to be present to observe its world. When it chooses not to be present to observe its world, its world disappears from existence and nothing remains. In the Eighth Bull, called *Both Bull and Self Transcended*, that nothingness is called *No-Thing*.

Truly, I have attained nothing from total enlightenment-Buddha

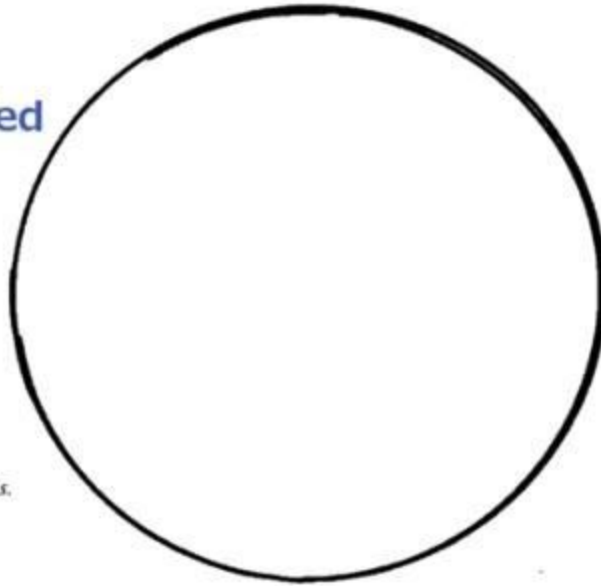
8 Both bull and self transcended

*Whip, rope, person, and bull --
all merge in No-Thing.*

*This heaven is so vast
no message can stain it.*

*How may a snowflake exist
in a raging fire?*

Here are the footprints of the patriarchs.



Comment: Mediocrity is gone. Mind is clear of limitation. I seek no state of enlightenment. Neither do I remain where no enlightenment exists. Since I linger in neither condition, eyes cannot see me. If hundreds of birds strew my path with flowers, such praise would be meaningless.

Transcending both the Bull and the *Self* is a state of *No-self*. When there is no self, there is also no other. There is only *One*. This ultimate state of *No-self* is a state of nothing perceivable. That ultimate nothingness is the ultimate nature of existence, which can only be experienced when everything else has disappeared from existence. One is transcending both the perceiving consciousness of the *Self* and the life-force of the Bull, which can only arise with the focus of one's attention and the light of consciousness. One only reaches this state of *No-self* when one has returned to the *Source*. The *Source* of the light of consciousness can only be described as darkness. The *Source* of perceiving consciousness can only be described as nothingness.

One can only return to the *Source* in an ultimate state of freefall. That is the only way one's own holographic world and everything in that world can disappear from existence. In an ultimate state of freefall, one experiences no acceleration, no force and no flow of energy. Without that experience of acceleration, one has no event horizon that limits one's holographic world, and no holographic screen that projects images of things in that holographic world. In an ultimate state of freefall, one's observations become unlimited, but paradoxically, one perceives nothing.

Before this ultimate state of freefall can occur, the observer must redirect its focus of attention inward and stabilize its attention on its own sense of being present. The outgoing projecting light of consciousness must be redirected inward in order to bring together one's life-force with one's perceiving consciousness and merge them into one consciousness. This is the highest level of consciousness one can have while one is still present to perceive one's own world, which is the

nature of the ascended Atmanic *Self*. Although this consciousness is ascended, one is still perceiving one's world in a subject-object relation and seeing two when there is really only one.

This highest sense of self in the sense of a subject-object relation is the Ascended *Self*. This is the highest sense of self one can have while one still perceives things in one's world, but there is still further. One is still in a state of duality and is seeing two, while in reality there is only one. One must go further to discover the source of one's consciousness, which is purely nondual. There is no sense of *Self* in the nondual awareness that is the *Source* of consciousness.

The highest sense of *Self* is the highest level of consciousness, but there is still *further*. The ultimate state is not a state of consciousness. The ultimate state is the ultimate nature of existence, which is nonconceptual. The highest level of consciousness or *Self* is characterized by the sense of being present or *I Am*. In a very real sense, *I Am* is the first concept that must be expressed before any other concepts can come into existence. The entire perceivable world is conceptual, and *I Am* must be expressed before the world comes into existence. *I Am* is the perceiver of that perceivable world, which can only come into existence from one's own point of view when perceived. *I Am* must come into existence before that world is perceived, but *I Am* is not the ultimate state. The source of *I Am* is the ultimate nonconceptual nature of existence.

The *I Am* or Atmanic *Self* must become free of all sense of self before going further. At the end of the awakening process, the Atmanic consciousness brings itself into focus and knows itself to be nothing more than the pure being of a presence of consciousness. It brings itself to the edge of the abyss that separates being present for its world from the void of not being present. At this point of singularity, it passes through the *gateless gate* and reunites itself and becomes one with the *Source* of consciousness. Through dissolution into the Brahmanic consciousness of *No-self*, one knows oneself to be that formless, timeless, undivided and unlimited pure being.

The Atmanic consciousness of an observer observing its own observable world is always a limitation of consciousness that arises from an observation-limiting holographic screen, which is a bounding surface of space that encodes all the information for everything the observer can observe in its holographic world. Brahmanic consciousness is inherently unlimited since it has no boundary. It has nothing observable since it encodes no information from which forms of information can be constructed. It has no energy that can give rise to the animation of forms.

Since all concepts are energetically animated forms of information, Brahmanic consciousness is inherently nonconceptual. No concept can ever describe it. Brahmanic consciousness can only be described in terms of the negation of all concepts as limitless, timeless, formless, selfless, emptiness and nothingness. Since it is undivided, it can also be described as oneness. Atmanic consciousness can only be divided from Brahmanic consciousness when a limiting holographic screen is constructed. Ultimately, when a limiting holographic screen is no longer constructed, limited and divided Atmanic consciousness must return to, reunite itself with and become one

with unlimited and undivided Brahmanic consciousness. It is then possible to say as Shankara stated long ago: *There is ultimately no difference between Atman and Brahman.*

9 Reaching the source

*Too many steps have been taken
returning to the root and the source.*

*Better to have been blind
and deaf from the beginning!*

*Dwelling in one's true abode,
unconcerned with that without --*

*The river flows tranquilly on
and the flowers are red.*



Comment: From the beginning, truth is clear. Poised in silence, I observe the forms of integration and disintegration. One who is not attached to form need not be reformed. The water is emerald, the mountain is indigo, and I see that which is creating and that which is destroying.

The Ninth Bull, called *Reaching the Source*, describes the *Source* as that which is creating and destroying the forms of integration and disintegration. It is both the *Source* of the *Self* and the *Source* of the light of consciousness. The *Source* is only describable as darkness, emptiness, silence and nothingness. That is the one truth. One sees this truth when one becomes the truth. To know the truth is to be the truth. Undivided awareness is aware of its true undivided nature. That is the truth that sets one free from the bondage of one's emotional self-identification with the form of a person. Freedom is freedom from emotional self-identification with and attachment to the form of a person. Undivided awareness need not reform itself into a new form if it has no desire to do so. One who is not emotionally attached to form need not be reformed.

There is nothing mysterious about things disappearing from existence when a presence of consciousness is not present to observe them. This happens each night when one falls into a deep sleep and everything disappears from existence from one's own point of view. One does not become unconscious in deep sleep. One becomes aware of nothing, which is the ultimate nature of what one really is. The only real difference between deep sleep and awakening is that with awakening from delusion one focuses one's attention on one's own sense of being present to the point that one becomes aware that the true nature of one's existence is that nothingness.

The second thing awakening from delusion proves is that one still exists even when everything in one's world disappears from existence and nothing remains. Like awakening from a dream, the true nature of the dreamer remains when the dreamer awakens and its dream disappears from existence. Awakening proves that everything in one's world is no more real than a dream. The ultimate nature of the dreamer is the nothingness that remains when everything disappears from existence. The formless nothingness that remains is the dreamer's underlying reality, or the ground of being, which is the ultimate reality of the dreamer's existence. That ultimate existence is timeless and can never cease to exist. It can only be described in the nonconceptual terms of negation as unlimited, undivided, formless nothingness, which is the mystery of *One Being*.

Awakening is knowing the truth of what one is. One always is what one is. One can only believe a false belief that one is something that one is not. That false belief is called a delusion. One can never stop being what one is. One can only take oneself to be something that one is not. The only thing that ever prevents one from awakening is delusion. At the end of the awakening process when everything disappears from existence and nothing remains, one no longer takes oneself to be something that one is not. One knows oneself to be that formless nothingness.

There are no subject-object relations in the nondual awareness that is the *Source* of perceiving consciousness, only *No-self*. The *Source* of the observer and its observable world can only be described in terms of negation as selfless, formless, timeless, nonconceptual nothingness. In that undivided and unlimited formless nothingness, being and knowing are the same. In that formless nothingness, one can only know what one is if one is what one knows. To know is to be. One can only know what one really is if one knows nothing, does nothing and is nothing.

10 In the world

*Barefooted and naked of breast,
I mingle with the people of the world.*

*My clothes are ragged and dust-laden,
and I am ever blissful.*

I use no magic to extend my life;

*Now, before me,
the dead trees become alive.*



Comment: Inside my gate, a thousand sages do not know me. The beauty of my garden is invisible. Why should one search for the footprints of the patriarchs? I go to the marketplace with my wine bottle and return home with my staff. I visit the wine shop and the market, and everyone I look upon becomes enlightened.

The Tenth Bull, called *In the World*, describes that after one reaches the *Source* and chooses to return to the world, one lives an integrated life in the world. This integrated life is characterized by surrender to divine will. One gives up the illusion of control. When one no longer expresses any personal bias and no longer interferes with the normal flow of things, the animating flow of energy through one's body comes into alignment with the normal flow of energy through one's world, and one feels connected to all things. When one detaches oneself from all things, one sees things from a higher level of consciousness with a sense of distance and detachment, like a movie that one is watching. One no longer has any desire to interfere with or direct the normal course of events in the movie. One just relaxes and allows things to play out in the normal way. One no longer tries to direct events in the movie. One is only watching as the movie plays for one's amusement. One knows oneself to be the perceiving consciousness out in the audience that is watching the movie. One has ascended to the highest possible level of consciousness.

An integrated life is lived both at a higher level of consciousness and a higher vibrational state. The connectedness of an integrated life is inherent in a holographic world, where all the bits of information for that world are holistically connected in the sense of quantum entanglement.

An integrated life is also characterized by expressions of creativity, since that is the nature of the normal flow of things. The behavior of one's character comes into alignment with the normal flow of things, and is characterized by right actions. An integrated life is characterized by a sense of gratitude for all that is given, which is also tinged with a sense of sadness for all that is lost. When one lives an integrated life, one still has likes and dislikes that arise from the way one's character is organized as a life-form, since all living organisms must express emotions as they live a life in the world. The significant distinction from living a self-identified life is that an integrated life is lived without personal bias, but with a sense of being connected to all things, the expression of creativity, and the sense of right action, as the emotional energy animating one's character comes into alignment with the flow of energy through one's world. Instead of personal bias, there is a sense of trust in the normal flow of things to sort out what is best for one's character and world. An integrated life is a life lived in the *best of all possible worlds*.

Tao in the world is like a river flowing home to the sea

Returning is the motion of the Tao

It returns to nothingness

It leads all things back to the great oneness

Empty yourself of everything

*In the silence and the void
Standing alone and unchanging
Ever present and in motion
I do not know its name
Call it Tao*

The wise are impartial

*The man of Tao remains unknown.
Perfect virtue produces nothing.
No-self is true self
And the greatest man is nobody*

*Ever desireless, one can see the mystery
Ever desiring, one can see the manifestations
These two spring from the same source
This appears as darkness
Darkness within darkness
The gate to all mystery*

*The great path has no gates
Thousands of roads enter it
When one passes through this gateless gate
One walks the universe alone*

*Passing Through the Gateless Gate of a Selfless Self
Transcended Self is No-self
Alone is All-One
One is No-thing
No-thing is Unlimited Being
One is Undivided Being
Selfless is Desireless is Timeless Being*

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