

## Do You Really Have to Destroy Your Ego to Spiritually Awaken?

Comment by Burton: I'd disagree with the idea of destroying the ego. Rather, not being attached to it, understanding its structure and how it functions, and cleaning it up so that it operates effectively in its role. You might enjoy my essay *In the Footsteps of Achilles*.

Counterpoints from Jed McKenna:

*Battling past the ego to get to the truth has been at the heart of countless spiritual teachings. Ego-death as a means to no-self is what this journey is all about. Anyone headed for truth is going to get there over ego's dead body or not at all.*

*Spiritual enlightenment is self-defeating. It is a battle we wage upon ourselves. Truth is a uniquely challenging pursuit because the very thing that wants it is the only thing in the way of it. It's a battle we must die to win. The great enemy is the very self that wages the war. When self is destroyed, who wins?*

*The deepest truth of any person is no-person. You don't wake up by perfecting your dream character; you wake up by breaking free of it. There's no truth to the ego so no degree of mastery over it results in anything true. Putting attention on the ego merely reinforces it.*

*We erect ego to compensate for the lack of direct self-knowledge. There is no true self to perceive, there is only false self and no-self. One looks for true self and finds nothing. It's the dread of that nothingness that keeps one's attention outwardly fixed.*

*We are madly, desperately, insanely afraid of the truth, and it is that fear that walls us off from our unbounded nature.*

*It is the emotional energy of fear that erects and maintains the egoic shell.*

*Fear of what? Fear of no-self. The nameless, faceless dread of non-being. Not just fear of death, which anyone can deny or explain away, but fear of nothingness, which no fairytale can fix.*

*The wall separating the awakened and unawakened states is a force field empowered by the emotional energy of fear. Only ego death defeats the barrier because the barrier is ego itself.*

*Spiritual enlightenment is the state in which the self is free of all delusion, including self itself. The process of becoming enlightened is a deliberate act of self-annihilation. It is the false self that does the killing and the false self that dies; a suicide in all but the physical sense. Because there is no true self to fill the vacancy created by the passing of the false self, no self remains.*

On the other hand:

*The process of awakening looks like it's about destroying ego, but that's not really accurate. You never completely rid yourself of ego-the false self-as long as you're alive, and it's not important that you do. What matters is the emotional tethers that anchor us to the dreamstate; that hold us in place and make us feel that we're a part of something real. We send out energetic tendrils from the nexus of ego like roots to attach ourselves to the dreamstate, and to detach from it we must sever them.*

*In this sense, freeing ourselves from attachment is indeed the process of awakening, but such attachments aren't what we have, they're what we are.*

*We need the boundaries ego provides. They're a necessary part of life in the amusement park. Self is the complex, shifting set of dimensions that give us shape and form and which distinguish us from other shapes and forms. The amusement park isn't 'come as you are', it's a costume party. Who you come as doesn't matter, only that you come as someone.*

*Ego doesn't need to be killed because it was never really alive. You don't have to destroy your false self because it's not real, which is really the whole point. It's just a character we play. What needs to be killed is that part of us that identifies with the character. Once that's done-really done, and it can take years-then you can wear the costume and play the character as it suits you, in the character but not of the character.*

It really depends on whether your goal is to live the best possible life you can possibly live, or whether your goal is to awaken to the spiritual truth of what you really are.

McKenna puts it this way:

*All attachments to the dreamstate are made of energy. That energy is called emotion. All emotions, positive and negative, are attachments. Humans are emotion-based creatures and all emotions derive their energy from one core emotion; fear. Fear cannot be confronted or slain because it is fear of nothing, of no-self. The desire to slay fear is itself a fear-based emotion. Fear can only be surrendered to; the thing feared, entered.*

Nisargadatta Maharaj puts it like this:

*One becomes self-conscious only when caught in the conflict between pleasure and pain, which demands choice and decision. The personal self by its very nature is constantly pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. The ending of this pattern is the ending of the self. The ending of the self with its desires and fears enables you to return to your real nature.*

*As long as you are locked up with your mind and ego, you cannot go further. Were you really at war with your ego, you would question its reality. You don't question because you are not really interested. You are moved by the pleasure-pain principle, fear and desire, which is your ego. You are going along with your ego, not fighting against it. You are not even aware how totally swayed you are by personal considerations. Be in revolt against your ego, for the ego narrows and distorts. It is the worst of all tyrants. It dominates you completely.*

*To be born means to create a world around yourself as the center. You are that point of consciousness. By your movement the world is ever created. Stop moving and there will be no world.*

Osho gives the most explicit description:

*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.*

*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.*

*That Being is void.*

*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.*

Burton's reply: I'm not sure that you got my point. The very idea of a battle, destruction of the ego, etc., to me, uses the very dialectic of conflict and conquest that the ego thrives on. When I say that the ego serves a function, but must be transcended so that it's not in control, there is much of the same idea, but phrased in the language of non-attachment. But perhaps we have different ideas of what the ego is. If all you're referring to is the ego attachments and such, rather than the internal psychic structures and functions then we're closer, although I prefer the idea of dissolving them rather than destroying. Again I'll recommend my medium essays *In the Footsteps of Achilles*, and *On Reading Henri Corbin's....*

I agree that words are misleading. That's why I prefer to use concepts of theoretical physics. The idea of transcending the ego by destroying the ego is the idea of dissolving into the void. It is your individual consciousness, present at the central point of view of your own holographic world, that dissolves back into the undifferentiated consciousness of the void, like a drop of water that dissolves back into the ocean. This can only happen when you stop expressing emotional energy and enter into an ultimate state of free-fall. You have to become desireless to become selfless. When the expression of all energy comes to an end, your own accelerated motion as a point of consciousness comes to an end. In that ultimate state of free-fall, you no longer have an event horizon that acts as your holographic screen, and so your own holographic world disappears from existence from your own point of view. That's when you, as an individual point of consciousness, dissolve back into the undifferentiated consciousness of the void. The individual being of the I Am or the Self dissolves back into the undivided being of No-self. That's the nature of spiritual enlightenment.

This is a timeless state of being because energy is no longer being expressed as a way of animating the images of a holographic world. Without the expression of emotional energy there is no animation of the world and the course of time comes to an end. This is an unlimited state of being because without accelerated motion there is no bounding surface of space that acts as a holographic screen that displays the images of a holographic world. This is an undivided state of being because there is no Self and no other. All is One. This ultimate state of being can only be described as the absolute nothingness of the void, which is deep and dark because the light of consciousness is no longer illuminating and projecting the images of a holographic world.

It seems to me that what you're describing when you say the ego is transcended so that it's not in control is what Jed McKenna calls the integrated state, which is the direct result of surrendering to divine will. When you surrender, you relinquish the desire to control things and give up your self-defensive desire to defend yourself. In reality, you're only defending the survival of a false personal self-concept of what you really are. When

you give up the desire to control things and defend yourself by surrendering to divine will, the flow of energy through body, mind and world comes into alignment, and you feel connected. You also come to know yourself to be the spiritual presence of consciousness at the center of your own world, which is the meaning of being born again. Before you can be born again, you have to die at the level of the ego, which requires your surrender. The integrated state can be described as awakening within the dream, which is not the same as the ultimate state of awakening from the dream. Awakening from the dream not only requires your surrender, but also requires the kind of ego death that results from severing emotional attachments. To awaken within the dream, you only have to stop expressing your own personally biased individual will as you surrender to divine will. To awaken from the dream, you have to stop expressing all emotional energy. You have to become desireless, selfless and motionless.

The only way you can become motionless is by withdrawing your attention away from the world you perceive, thereby withdrawing your investment of emotional energy in that world, which is necessary to animate that world. The only reason you'll ever withdraw your attention away from the world you perceive is because you see that world to be an illusion and lose interest in paying attention to that illusion. You have to see the emotionally animated life your character appears to live in that world as an illusion of what you really are and lose interest in paying attention to that illusory life. You sever your emotional attachment to that life by withdrawing your investment of emotional energy in that life. When you sever the emotional attachment to your character, your character becomes dead to you. You lose interest in living that life. You have to detach yourself from that life so that you can see that life as an illusion of what you really are, like the life that a character appears to live in a movie that you're watching.

You can only know yourself to be the perceiver of the movie, which is nothing more than a presence of perceiving consciousness that exists at its own point of view out in the movie audience. The animated images of the movie are only projected from the movie screen to your point of view out in the audience because you're emotionally animating them as you pay attention to them. The person in the world you perceive that you've taken yourself to be and identified yourself with is only the central character of the movie. When you detach yourself from your character and see the images of the movie as an illusion of what you really are, you lose interest in them and stop animating them. That's the only way you can stop emotionally identifying yourself with your character in the movie. You also stop illuminating the images with the light of consciousness and stop projecting them. Only when you see that world as an illusion and lose interest in the life your character appears to live in that world will you withdraw your attention away from that world, stop paying attention to that world, and stop emotionally animating, illuminating and projecting the images of that world. That's when you become

motionless and enter into an ultimate state of free-fall, within which the world you perceive disappears from existence from your own point of view.

As you withdraw your attention away from the world you perceive, the only way you can spiritually awaken to the truth of what you really are is if you look within and refocus your attention on your own sense of being present as the perceiver of that world, which is the only true thing you can know about yourself as you perceive that world. You have to shift and stabilize the focus of your attention on your own sense of being present, which is your own sense of I-Am-ness, while you withdraw your attention away from the world you perceive. You have to know yourself to be a pure presence of perceiving and illuminating consciousness at the central point of view of the world you perceive. If you keep your attention focused on your own sense of being present as the perceiver of that world while you withdraw your attention away from the world, you have the experience of falling into the void as that world disappears from existence from your own point of view. That's when you become spiritually enlightened. Your individual being, the I Am, dissolves back into the undivided being of the void. Individual consciousness dissolves back into its source of undifferentiated consciousness like a drop of water that dissolves back into the ocean.

The whole awakening process is described by Nisargadatta Maharaj in exquisite detail:

*Once you realize that there is nothing in this world which you can call your own, you look at it from the outside as you look at a play on the stage or a picture on the screen. To know the picture as the play of light on the screen gives freedom from the idea that the picture is real. In reality I only look. Whatever is done is done on the stage. Joy and sorrow, life and death, they are real to the man in bondage. To me they are all in the show, as unreal as the show itself.*

*I see only consciousness, and know everything to be but consciousness, as you know the pictures on the cinema screen to be but light.*

*It is enough to shift attention from the screen onto oneself to break the spell.*

*To the Self the world is but a passing show. The world just sprouts into being out of nothing and returns to nothing. As long as the Self is merely aware, there is no problem.*

*You can stop it any moment by switching off attention.*

*You make it possible by giving it attention.*

*The world is but a mistaken view of reality, unreal to its core.*

*The world is but a show, glittering and empty. It is there as long as I want to see it and take part in it. When I cease caring, it dissolves. It has no cause and serves no purpose. It appears exactly as it looks, but there is no depth in it nor meaning.*

*My life is a succession of events just like yours. Only I Am detached and see the passing show as a passing show, while you stick to things and move along with them.*

*There is no such thing as an expression of reality. Neither action nor feeling nor thought express reality. I know that life itself is only a make-believe. I just watch events happening, knowing them to be unreal.*

*From my point of view everything happens by itself, quite spontaneously. I do nothing. I just see them happen.*

*What begins and ends is mere appearance. The world can be said to appear but not to be. It is your memory that makes you think that the world continues. Memory creates the illusion of continuity. I see the world as it is, a momentary appearance in consciousness.*

*To imagine that you are in control is the aberration of the body-mind. There is a universal power that is in control. The illusion of personal control is in the mind only. Stand without desire and fear, relinquishing all control. This is the shortest way to reality.*

*Desire for embodied existence is the root-cause of trouble.*

*By desiring you take the shape of your desires. When no desires remain, you revert to your natural state. All desires must be given up.*

*The way to truth lies through the destruction of the false. To destroy the false you must question your most inveterate beliefs. Of these the idea that you are the body is the worst.*

*Destroy the wall that separates, the 'I-am-the-body-idea'.*

*Only in complete self-negation is there a chance to discover our real being.*

*The urge must come from within as a wave of detachment.*

*It is disinterestedness that liberates. If you lose interest, you break the emotional link that perpetuates the bondage.*

*Giving up is the first step. The real giving up is in realizing that there is nothing to give up, for nothing is your own. Give up all and you gain all.*

*Self-identifications are patently false and the cause of bondage.*

*You create bondage when you desire and fear and identify yourself with your feelings. You identify yourself with your desires and become their slave. Your bonds are self-created as chains of attachment.*

*Your attachment is your bondage.*

*There is trouble only when you cling to something. It is your desire to hold onto it that creates the problem. Let go. When you hold onto nothing, no trouble arises.*

*All attachment implies fear, for all things are transient. Fear makes one a slave. Freedom from attachment is natural when one knows one's true being.*

*Freedom means letting go. Spiritual maturity lies in the readiness to let go of everything.*

*Cut the knot of self-identification.*

*Liberation is never of the person, it is always from the person.*

*The reward of Self-knowledge is freedom from the personal self.*

*The dissolution of personality is always followed by a sense of great relief, as if a heavy burden has fallen off.*

*When you are in dead earnest, you bend every incident, every second of your life, to your purpose. You do not waste time and energy on other things. You are totally dedicated, call it one-pointedness of the mind.*

*In the end you get fed up with the waste of time and energy.*

*When you refuse to play the game you are out of it.*



*You must begin by being the dispassionate observer. Then only will you realize your full being.*

*As long as you are enmeshed in the tribulations of a particular personality, you can see nothing beyond it. Ultimately you will come to see that you are neither the particular nor the universal. You are beyond both.*

*You can spend an eternity looking elsewhere for truth, all in vain. You must begin in yourself, with yourself. Realize that your world is only a reflection of yourself. All you need is to stop searching outside what can only be found within.*

*Turn within. I Am you know. Be with it all the time, until you revert to it spontaneously. There is no simpler and easier way.*

*As long as you are engrossed in the world, you cannot know yourself. To know yourself, turn your attention away from the world and turn within.*

*Remain as the silent witness only; a mere point in consciousness, dimensionless and timeless.*

*Give attention to the witness to break the spell of the known, the illusion that only the perceivable is real. As long as you believe that only the perceivable world is real you remain its slave.*

*To become free your attention must be drawn to the witness.*

*Know yourself as you are. Stay with the sense I Am.*

*Wherever you go, at all times, you carry with you the sense of being present and aware, here and now. It means that you are independent of space and time. Space and time are in you, not you in them. It is only your self-identification with the body, limited in space and time, that gives you a sense of limitation. In reality, you are limitless.*

*Your world is created with the emergence of the I Am idea. In your world everything has a beginning and an end. Timeless being is entirely in the now.*

*Once you are well established in the now, you have nowhere else to go.*

*Externalization is the first step in liberation. Step away and look. Separate yourself and watch. The physical events will go on happening, but in themselves they have no importance.*

*Seeing that you are not the person you take yourself to be, step out and look from the outside.*

*You must realize yourself as the silent witness of all that happens. Your consciousness raised to a higher dimension, from which you see everything much clearer.*

*All you can do is to shift the focus of consciousness beyond the mind.*

*One becomes self-conscious only when caught in the conflict between pleasure and pain, which demands choice and decision. The personal self by its very nature is constantly pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. The ending of this pattern is the ending of the self. The ending of the self with its desires and fears enables you to return to your real nature.*

*As long as you take yourself to be a person, a body and a mind, separate from the stream of life, having a will of its own, pursuing its own aims, you are living merely on the surface and whatever you do will be short-lived and of little value, mere straw to feed the flames of vanity.*

*As long as you are locked up with your mind and ego, you cannot go further. Were you really at war with your ego, you would question its reality. You don't question because you are not really interested. You are moved by the pleasure-pain principle, fear and desire, which is your ego. You are going along with your ego, not fighting against it. You are not even aware how totally swayed you are by personal considerations. Be in revolt against your ego, for the ego narrows and distorts. It is the worst of all tyrants. It dominates you completely.*

*Everyone sees the world through the idea one has of oneself. As you think your Self to be, so you think your world to be. If you imagine your Self as separate from the world, the world will appear as separate from you and you will experience desire and fear. Your own creative power projects on it a picture and all your questions refer to the picture.*

*Your questions are about a non-existing person. Realize that whatever you think yourself to be is just a stream of events; that whatever happens, comes and goes, is not real; that you alone are, the changeless among the changeful. Separate the observed*

*from the observer and abandon false identifications. Be a fully awakened witness of the field of consciousness.*

*All you need to do is to cease taking your Self to be within the field of consciousness. To look for it on the mental level is futile. It is here and now-the I Am you know so well.*

*When the mind stays in the I Am, without moving, you enter a state that cannot be verbalized but can be experienced. The sense I Am is always with you, only you have attached all kinds of things to it-body, feelings, thoughts, ideas. All these self-identifications are misleading; because of them you take your Self to be what you are not.*

*It is enough to know what you are not. You need not know what you are. What you are cannot be described except as total negation. Let go of your attachment to the unreal.*

*Dive deep into yourself and find the source from where all meaning flows. It is not the superficial mind that can give meaning. You are not what you think yourself to be. You cannot think yourself to be what you have not experienced. You are the perceiving point, the nondimensional source of all dimensions, which is as nothing and yet the source of everything. You can know what you are not, but you cannot know your real being. You can only be what you are.*

*To realize that is the end of all seeking. You come to it when you see all you think yourself to be as mere imagination and stand aloof in pure awareness. It is not difficult but detachment is needed. It is the clinging to the false that makes the truth so difficult to see. Discard what is not your own until nothing is left which you can disown. You will find that what is left is nothing.*

*In reality nothing happens. Nothing happens to space itself. In pure consciousness nothing ever happens. Onto the screen of the mind destiny forever projects its pictures, and thus illusion constantly renews itself. The pictures come and go as light intercepted by ignorance. See the light and disregard the pictures.*

*When the mind is quiet we come to know ourselves as the pure witness.  
We withdraw from the experience and stand apart in pure awareness.  
The personality continues, but its self-identification with the witness snaps.*

*The realized man is beyond life and death. Life and death appears to him but a way of expressing movement in the immovable, change in the changeless. He has died before*

*his death and he saw that there was nothing to be afraid of. The moment you know your real being you are afraid of nothing.*

*Death gives freedom. To be free in the world you must die to the world.*

*I Am dead already. Physical death will make no difference. I Am timeless being.*

*First we must know ourselves as witnesses only, dimensionless and timeless centers of observation, and then realize that immense ocean of pure awareness.*

*On the surface of the ocean of consciousness, names and forms are transitory waves. Only consciousness has real being, not its transformations.*

*Every moment returns to its source, just as every wave subsides into the ocean.*

*Be aware of being conscious and seek the source of consciousness.*

*Realization is in discovering the source and abiding there.*

*To know the source is to be the source.*

*Go back to that state of pure being, the I Am in its purity before it became contaminated with false self-identifications. Abandon them all. Focus the mind on pure being. In it all disappears: myself, the life I live, the world around me. Only peace and unfathomable silence remains.*

*The I Am in movement creates the world; the I Am at peace becomes the Absolute.*

*To be born means to create a world around yourself as the center.*

*You are that point of consciousness.*

*By your movement the world is ever created.*

*Stop moving and there will be no world.*

*The search for reality is the most dangerous of all undertakings for it will destroy the world in which you live.*

*As long as you are interested in your present way of living, you will shirk from the final leap into the unknown.*

*The witness-consciousness is the reflection of the real in the mind. The real is beyond.*

*The witness is the door through which you pass beyond.*

*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.*

*Between desires and freedom from all desires is an abyss which must be crossed.  
Cross the door and go beyond.*

*The Supreme reality is the void beyond being and non-being, beyond consciousness.  
There is no journey to Supreme reality. One is undeceived only.*

*The Supreme state neither comes nor goes. It is. It is a timeless state, ever present.  
In the timeless state there is no Self, no I Am, no witness.*

*Realization is sudden and irreversible. You rotate into a new dimension. You see everything as it is. The world of illusions is left behind.*

*The experience of the inner void is an explosion into reality.*

*Reality is essentially alone.*

*To know that nothing is, is true knowledge.*

*One is left without questions; no answers are needed.  
There is nothing left to do. One's work is done.*

*Do nothing. There is nothing to do. Just be.  
To be, you must be nobody.*

*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.*

Burton's reply: All very fine, but have you actually experienced any of this, or are you expressing things that you've been told? If you haven't read my two suggested essays (the final paragraph of the Henri Corbin one is particularly relevant here), perhaps a look

at the paper On Having No Head would help. It's reprinted in the book The Mind's I (with very stupid editorial comments).

I read over your essays, and I can only come to the conclusion that you're a physicalist, by which I mean that you only seem to accept the reality of the physical world and deny the spiritual reality of consciousness, which for me is primordial and independent of the physical world. This of course is the whole problem with science, beginning with theoretical physics. If you deny the primordial existence of consciousness, then science really doesn't make any sense. Just look at all the confusion out there about the measurement problem of quantum theory. Physics is full of paradoxes of self-reference in the sense of the Godel incompleteness theorems, which is what creates all the confusion and inconsistencies, because science in general and physics in particular deny the primordial and independent spiritual existence of consciousness. From my point of view, the perceivable physical world cannot even appear to come into existence unless consciousness has its own independent existence. Consciousness has to perceive the physical world before the perceivable physical world can even appear to come into existence. How could we even talk about the physical world unless we perceive it? The science of the physical world, just like the physical world in its totality, is only possible because of perception. Without perception, there is no physical world and no science of the physical world. Once you accept this as the nature of reality, then it becomes obvious that consciousness has a multitude of aspects besides perception, like the light of consciousness that illuminates the world and the motion of consciousness that animates the world. The problem of free will is simply the problem of how consciousness focuses its attention on things in the world.

As an important corollary, it's obvious that consciousness is not really a part of the perceivable physical world, but instead is like an observer out in a movie audience that only watches as the animated images of the movie are projected from a movie screen to the observer's point of view. It also becomes obvious that consciousness must have a primordial ultimate state of existence, which is best described as the undifferentiated consciousness of the void, and a differentiated state of existence that arises from the void, which is best described as the point of view of an observer at the center of its own world. This state of affairs is what enlightened beings like Nisargadatta are describing through their own direct experience. It's also what Plato attempted to describe in the Allegory of the Cave. The remarkable thing that I've discovered is that modern theoretical physics, with its holographic principle of quantum gravity, once given a proper interpretation in terms of the consciousness of the observer, is also giving a confirmation of this description. However, none of this will make any sense to you as long as you remain in the mind-set of a physicalist, or as Nisargadatta puts it: *As long as you believe that only the perceivable world is real you remain its slave.* Or as Morpheus told Neo in the Matrix: *The Matrix has you.*

The holographic principle, correctly understood in terms of the consciousness of the observer, does a very nice job of explaining the nature of the world. The world is just like a computer-generated virtual reality that is being displayed on a computer screen. This is a quantum computer because the bits of information encoded on the computer screen are quantized bits of information, called qubits, that have the property of quantum entanglement, which is a result of their mathematical structure in terms of matrices. A matrix is a two dimensional array of numbers that must be encoded on a two dimensional surface of space, which arises as the observer's event horizon. The observer itself creates its own quantum computer due to its own accelerated motion that gives rise to its event horizon that becomes its holographic screen when qubits of information are encoded on its horizon. Everything the observer can observe in its own holographic world is a form of information that can be reduced to qubits of information encoded on its own holographic screen. Those forms are projected like images from the observer's holographic screen to its central point of view and are animated in the flow of energy that energizes the operation of the quantum computer, which can be understood as arising from the energy of the observer's own accelerated motion.

This explanation not only resolves all the paradoxes of quantum theory, but it also explains the origin of the laws of physics. The laws of physics are not really anything fundamental, but instead naturally emerge in a holographic world as thermodynamic equations of state when things are near thermal equilibrium. The laws of physics are really nothing more than the computational rules that govern the operation of the quantum computer, which naturally emerge in a holographic world as thermodynamic equations of state when things are near thermal equilibrium.

This explanation also nicely solves the measurement problem of quantum theory. The quantum state of the observer's holographic world is defined in terms of how entangled qubits of information are encoded on its holographic screen. An observation of that world is a quantum state reduction that disentangles the quantum state of that world. An observation always occurs now, in the present moment. An observation occurs as the observer focuses its attention on something in its holographic world. An observation is always a choice, as in what to observe or which path to follow through that world. As the observer focuses its attention, the observer is focusing the light of consciousness on that world, and it is the light of consciousness that is illuminating and projecting the images of that world. In the process of projecting the images, choices are made as the quantum state of that world is disentangled. This explanation also solves the qualia problem of perception, in that the quality of things, like the perception of the color red rather than the wavelength of a photon, is inherent in how the light of consciousness projects the images as the quantum state is disentangled rather than in the numerical quantities of the entangled qubits of information that underlie the form of those things.

This explanation also resolves all the measurement paradoxes of quantum theory, like the Schrodinger cat and the Wigner friend paradoxes. These paradoxes result from mistakenly assuming that the same world is observed by multiple observers, while the holographic principle tells us that every observer observes its own holographic world. At most, there can be information sharing when holographic screens overlap like a Venn diagram. Multiple observers can only share a consensual reality when their respective holographic screens overlap like a Venn diagram and share information, just like the kind of information sharing seen in a computer network of connected computer screens. In reality, every observer is at the central point of view of its own holographic world, and the quantum state of that world is defined in terms of how qubits of information are encoded on the observer's own holographic screen. This also resolves all the quantum entanglement paradoxes of spooky action at a distance. Observations are never a local phenomena, but rather are a global phenomena as the entangled quantum state of the observer's entire holographic world is disentangled. The holographic principle tells us there is no such thing as local realism. Everything is connected to everything else.

This explanation also solves the problem of the mind. Observations in a holographic world are not just about physical events that appear to occur in that world, but are also about mental events that occur in that world, like thoughts, memories, emotional states, and other forms of mental imagination. All of these events are forms of information that can be reduced to qubits of information encoded on the observer's holographic screen, which are projected like images from the observer's screen to its central point of view and are animated in the flow of energy. The projection of an image requires a choice, in the sense of the observer's focus of attention and focusing the light of consciousness that disentangles the quantum state, and the animation of an image requires the energy of the observer's own accelerated motion. The nature of memory is really no more complicated than the kind of memory that occurs inside a computer due to the encoding of information. The nature of thoughts is no more complicated than the self-referential narration of a computer-generated virtual reality movie by the central character of that movie. The self-image inherent in all self-referential thoughts is always constructed out of memory as an emotional projection from the present moment, and the self-referential thought is emotionally constructed in the mind as that self-image is emotionally related to the image of some other thing that appears in the observer's holographic world.

This explanation also explains the nature of delusion. The observer is emotionally identifying itself with its mentally constructed personal self-image due to feelings of emotional self-limitation that arise as the self-image is emotionally animated in its mind. The observer is emotionally identifying itself with its body-based, mentally constructed and emotionally energized personal self-concept. The observer's personal self-image is always body-based. The observer's body is the central form of information that appears in the observer's holographic world. The central form of the body is always emotionally



animated relative to all other forms that appear in the observer's holographic world, which creates feelings of emotional self-limitation to the body as the body is emotionally animated. With delusion, the observer takes itself to be its body. In reality, the observer's body is only like the central character that appears in a virtual reality movie that it is watching as animated images of the movie are projected from a movie screen to its own point of view out in the movie audience. Delusion is personal because the personal self-concept is constructed from a body-based self-image, which in reality is no more real than the central form of information that appears in the observer's holographic world. The personal self-concept only seems to be real because its emotionally animated, which creates emotional feelings of self-limitation to the body that feel real.

The only way to break free from delusion is to become spiritually enlightened. The end result of spiritual enlightenment is knowing nothing, which is a natural result of doing nothing and becoming nothing. This naturally happens when you totally withdraw your attention away from the world you perceive, thereby entering into an ultimate state of free-fall, within which the world you perceive disappears from existence from your own point of view. Your individual consciousness, present at the central point of view of your own holographic world, dissolves back into its source, which is the undifferentiated consciousness of the void, like a drop of water that dissolves back into the ocean. As Nisargadatta says: *To know the source is to be the source*. Once you become spiritually enlightened, you not only know the true nature of what you really are, but you can also clearly see how the whole illusion is created.



Nothingness