

Interview by Jean-Louis Accarias – November 2016

What happened to you, even if nothing happened?

Something happened indeed, otherwise we would not have started this conversation! What is prodigious, yet unthinkable or unimaginable, is that nothing happened to Didier. This of course makes no sense in the usual context. But here, this is exactly what we are speaking of: a complete change of context.

What happened is the disappearance of a mirage. Something that seemed very real and personal fell off; all of a sudden it dissolved. But since this “something” never really existed in the first place, nothing really happened.

It would be inexact to say that nothing happened to Didier in the light of such a change in his life. It is a paradox; the term “waking up to the dream” is well suited here, just like “lucid dreaming” whereby the involvement in the stories of the character and/or events just stops.

To put it differently, the terrestrial scene, including the main character in its centre, reveals itself totally anew in terms of interpreting life, whereas the sensory elements remain absolutely the same.

Think of those pictures whereby a character, for instance a fairy or a witch, that seems hidden within a complex background, suddenly appears from nowhere. It was always there in plain sight, but we never noticed it. The eye had casually glanced over the picture, paying no attention to its specificity and meaning; therefore it could not deliver its true message.

Now let's define this "something" which never really existed! Within this space-time story that we can call "my life", thoughts are cleverly assembled one by one in a linked sequence, literally and metaphorically: firstly, a logical sequence of unverified conclusions which form a sort of chain; secondly a deep attachment to these thoughts which locks me here and prevents from looking elsewhere.

Thoughts of “me” existing here only in a specific location lead in turn to thoughts of not existing there in the world; they furthermore bring about thoughts of isolation / separation and reinforce the experience of an intimate yet essentially hallucinatory “me”. The “me” thought substantiates what is “not-me”, that is this external and rather hostile and threatening world. We come full circle and the chain of thoughts, nicely padlocked so to speak, appears as real.

If we replace “something” by me, this is what we get: "me" who seemed very real, so personal, is gone, it's totally vanished. However, since this so called “me” never really existed, nothing ever happened.

What remained of you after awakening? What about your distinct individual traits?

The specific features of the Didier body-mind are for the most part exactly the same. If we want to use an analogy, when fish adapt to a new environment, their size and colour may happen to change, but they basically don't change species. (Please note that it is not awakening that changes us, but the new context. It is by no means the awakening of an individual person.)

But as Stephen Jourdain would say, “Something happened to 'Bibi'”, right?

Yes, Stephen Jourdain spoke of Bibi, this divine child, and surely not of "my little person" whom he also called ironically "MeeE".

The whole landscape changes. What we viewed as limited, hostile and disturbing disappears. As a matter of fact, there is now much more space ... so much more space! All the place in the world that inevitably brings about indirect changes. If we go back to the fish analogy, it would be like a fish jumping out of a tiny fishbowl and suddenly finding itself swimming in an ocean.

These changes vary from story to story, and it's not very helpful to even speak of these changes. It could even be misleading, leading to confusion and expectations. However, there are elements common to all: mental silence, peace, harmony.

I am not trying to safeguard the ego, but it seems to me that we have all gone through some serious learning processes during our life. We have had experiences, gone to meetings, done some practices and more. All that we did was not in vain, was it? What do you think?

Of course, nothing you did was in vain. However, what we need to realize is that “you” never did anything: Life lived itself.

An external, judgmental angle is the surest way to worsen the fragmentation of our lives. Each step, each re-cognition, each encounter can be seen as early signs of Now. They are never the cause of anything, even if our usual thinking process says so.

Let's try this. Here and Now is a 3D scene, including the five senses, plus thoughts and emotions, sensations and perceptions. Can you agree that it is a masterpiece, whatever the content? Could we see that it is completely unique and priceless?

In order for this wonder to materialize, Life “needs” creative tools. These tools are the so-called past experiences and accumulated knowledge, which are in fact merely constitutive elements and not the cause of any creation. Likewise, awakening is never the result of past experiences and practices.

Is there not, however, a minimum of preparation that is necessary to awaken? Shouldn't we make ourselves open?

A preparation - as you call it - will very often be an early sign of awakening, a sort of anticipated celebration of an "announced" event that already is present. The preparation could never be the root cause of anything.

How do you define non-duality (advaita)?

Simply “not two”.

We simply need to go back to the primary term “not two” AND HOLD ON TO IT.

The suggestion is “not two” but this is not how we usually hear it. We generally confuse “not two” with “one”! So it subtly becomes an extremely difficult equation to solve. Everything in our experience makes us believe in a separation (two) which could be resolved by disappearing in Unicity (one). This is a gaping hole!

The term “not two” is actually an invitation to acknowledge that “not two” has always been the case; and that it is impossible for an imagined tiny part – a body-mind - to merge with the Whole. This movement would be an energy consuming hamster-wheel type of activity bringing no fulfilling results.

The trap is to give credit to an imagined separation fueled by various attempts to reunify ourselves with the Whole. It might initially appear to be a clever activity with an honorable goal, but it contains an infectious virus leading to a disease: a fragmented life.

Without realizing it, all our "spiritual practices" may indeed quieten the mind but - almost invisibly - keep us in a subtle duality, which is a very fertile ground for the illusion to thrive. Therefore, the way out of the dream is not to alter or improve the elements of the dream but to understand the nature of the dream, which is this almost invisible split: “I” becoming “me / not me”. This very split creates a separate entity.

What would be the most skilful way to see that there is no separate entity? While many of us know that it is illusory, this understanding is completely insufficient. What could provoke or contribute to the “switch”, although you say there isn’t a cause to awakening?

Indeed, an intellectual understanding of our hallucinatory situation is obviously not enough. However, Clarity is just a few inches away from Seeing / Knowing. We tend to believe there is still a whole mountain to climb, but it is only a thought. A tiny stumble may be enough to foster full comprehension. This has been my experience.

In the “rope and snake” metaphor (my favourite!), once we have analysed the contours of the thing laying in the dark, compared them to all the objects stocked in our memory, selected the ones that seem the best match, concluded that the rope is the best option, then validated this option as the only option ... there is still an essential step to take: converting “It obviously seems to be a rope.” into “It is a rope!”

It is the leap from an intellectual understanding to a living reality. Now how does the mutation happen? It is a mystery, I keep on exploring ...

Would vigilance be the essential practice, if not the only one that is really necessary?

Vigilance - or true attention - is the earthly side of a divine movement: awareness knowing itself, directly, intimately, without separation.

If it becomes a practice, it has the great disadvantage of creating a gap - however small – between I and vigilance. It perpetuates a form of separation, and with it, the world "over there" appears!

Now there is a vigilance which is not the result of an action, a will or a practice. It is free and transparent; it is always present. What is necessary for its recognition is a very specific relaxation: not that of the body - although that could help - and not necessarily that of the mind - who could tame it? - but that of attention itself.

Attention attentive to itself, in a very light way, without seeking to be attentive, simply being “openness” to attention. It may sound rather passive. However, it is very alive, it is Life itself.

Can you explain what you mean by this mysterious and quite astonishing sentence found in your book: "It's not about having a user manual to acquire something, but to walk stark naked, bare feet in water near exposed electric wires"?!"

This mainly means that I have no idea how this mutation happens! :-)

Nevertheless, there is something that is invariable. Yes, there is a constant! It appears that a sense of great vulnerability and a good dose of courage are both necessary. Total risk-taking is essential. Hence the above reference to - metaphorically of course! - be ready to walk in water next exposed electric wires!

It's rather simple: you have to be ready to lose everything in order to gain everything, even if this proposal obviously seems to defy your good old common sense ...

To find out more about the book "EXPLORATIONS NON-DUELLES – Retour au Paradis perdu" and Didier Weiss, visit www.nondualexplorations.com/about