

“Awareness reiterating itself” by Didier Weiss

« *In the crowd of the pilgrimage, I got lost ... So I went down to the police station to declare the loss of myself. A nearby officer slapped my cheek so hard that it turned red and went on asking: "Tell me, who is this guy?" Instantly, I became aware of myself and was very happy to meet myself again.* » Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj

This humorous story describes this loss of self that goes completely unnoticed more often than not. Our feeling of emptiness is so huge that we keep on filling it automatically with everything that comes to hand and mind all through our so called “human life”. Without us realizing it, it has become our "usual state of consciousness".

There are endless possibilities offered by our leisure and consumption society to fill this insidious and persistent sense of lack. As a matter of fact, excess is often the norm in terms of the addiction spectrum: food, video games, television, shopping, outings, sex, alcohol, drugs, sports ... Last but not least Internet with its great array of social networks!

We, human beings, intuitively feel our existence is fleeting, time-bound, unlikely. And this can be terribly scary when we do not know who we really are. Our sense of existence constantly needs fuel to maintain itself and survive.

This is when our Instagram, FaceBook, Twitter, WhatsApp succeed in defining “us”, who we think we are. Thanks to our network of virtual friends with whom we post and share anything and everything, our various accounts largely contribute to fill the terrible void.

They boost “our social image”, what we usually call our self. "Selfies", these instant photos which reflect our social image – our mistaken identity, what we take ourselves to be – desperately seek reassuring comments and flattering "likes". We thrive on attention. Feedback of our peers clearly define the contours of our sense of existence: both positive and negative comments make us feel strong and alive as a social being. Alternately, a lack of response may make us feel small and unworthy of attention, if not altogether ... dead!

We know deep down we are fighting a losing battle but we are so vain! With great effort, like Sisyphus, we keep on rolling again and again our boulder up the hill only to find ourselves every time right back where we were. We dedicate most of our physical and mental activities to this agonizing pursuit of building and safeguarding our image which requires more energy than we can ever boast.

This is when the “energy saving” techniques found in Carlos Castaneda's teachings may help us recover the energy we wasted, by slowly but surely and radically, deflating our arrogance. They teach us how to abandon gradually, one by one, the remnants of what Don Juan calls our "self-importance". The most cunning techniques of survival of our ego drop to the ground all by themselves. A time might come when we find ourselves utterly defeated and consent to surrender. And finally there we are ... stripped of all pretence.

The message could not be clearer and direct: “*Stop !!!*” Gangaji

And this is how, in this newly revealed "no man's land", in this “unknowing”, in this time of simply being present/conscious without expectation, by accident or by chance, in a subtle or rough way - *an officer slapped me !* - our ever so familiar load of ideas, beliefs and opinions that have defined what/who we have seemed to be so far, are now seen for what they are: unexplored assumptions. This suddenly available energy influx magically becomes a fertile ground of transcendence in our day-to-day lives.

An intuition whispers in our ears:

"Plenitude is awareness of being knowing itself." Jean-Yves Leloup

"Consciousness is the only thing that exists, it knows itself, by itself." Francis Lucille

If fate has it, an interest to explore further in this direction may surface at some point, an urge may come to watch this somewhat strange, yet simple and natural process take its natural course. It is about recognising that myself = Presence = Existence = Awareness conscious of itself = Consciousness.

"To be the Self is to see the Self. Through Vichara, there is a radiant state of consciousness I-I".
Ramana Maharshi

But then, why are we constantly seeking to lose ourselves in all that Life has to offer in terms of experience. Why is it that we become so fascinated by the "objects" thronging our life that we completely forget about our true nature?

I will share here an unpublished excerpt from my email correspondence with Pierre:

Pierre : In "The Breath of the Absolute - dialogues with Mooji", I can sense what you are alluding to.

"Out of habit, Consciousness is naturally identified with your attention which keeps wandering in search of objects and rarely rests at its source. When your attention goes to thought-objects or sensation-objects, there is inattention. When attention remains at its Source, it is true attention. This true attention will eventually merge into the Source, stay with It and become synonymous with the Source itself, which is beyond attention and inattention. It is nameless and formless. Be That! "

But how to be really attentive to thoughts, feelings, emotions in a rightful way? What is true attention?

Didier : When Mooji talks about inattention, he talks about our fascination for objects we know through the five senses, while we remain completely oblivious to ... their Essence.

Let me take an example. Picture yourself watching an exciting film in perfect conditions. There will be a natural tendency to forget yourself and identify with the characters in the story. This identification will generate reactions and emotions you may not even be aware of. When we, spectators watching a film, completely "forget" ourselves, the cinematographic experience is complete.

It's the same in life outside the movie-theatre. Only it is Maya THX! :-)

In everyday life, Maya's role is to keep us inattentive, busy with ourselves, through continuously changing body sensations, emotions and thoughts, like children really engrossed in play.

Now, by chance or by accident, we may happen to experience deep boredom or a terrible fear, or again the utter beauty of a magnificent sunset or feel the intimacy of a lover's touch. In those moments, the impression of being a separate individual subsides and "we" literally disappear from the map. Suddenly a new perspective is revealed and Awareness becomes aware of itself!

"The phenomenon of consciousness is the phenomenon of self-aware awareness. Awareness reiterating itself . This self-aware "spark" of consciousness is what I am, my only body.

Consciousness is "myself" knowing "myself" in a direct way, not in an abstract way. "
Stephen Jourdain

"There is nothing to practise. To know yourself, be yourself. To be yourself, stop imagining yourself to be this or that. Just be. Let your true nature emerge. Don't disturb your mind with seeking. Do not be fooled, the simplicity of my advice is misleading ... Few are those who have the courage to trust simplicity and innocence. " Nisargadatta Maharaj

Let's stay focused here. It is a single undivided happening. It is not "myself" becoming aware of objects and becoming aware of "my true self".

It could be described as "awareness of objects" is "awareness of itself". No framework, no reference point. It is Conscience-Objects, better said in one word: Conscienceobjects.

You asked what true attention is. Difficult to say ... words fail. On the other hand, inattention is fairly easy to describe: in the movement of consciousness, awareness appears to return in a rather mistaken way to a fictitious subject which appears completely real: me, this body/mind – a mere object among zillions of other objects - instead of returning to awareness itself.

One moment of inattention or distraction, and a little separate human being appears, an apparent subject who holds centre stage within a vast scary objective world. This is what we call an individual. And it is not a comfortable position! He/she is located right here with his/her own inner world and the outer world is located out there, hence an acute sense of separation. As a result, our true nature, undivided and unbounded by time and space - the "original face" in the Zen tradition - completely fails to be recognized.

When Mooji talks about "*merging into the source*", "*staying at the source*", what he means is, coming to know/see that the source and objects in the manifestation are the two inseparable sides of the same coin: "myself". It is what we intrinsically are.

True attention may seem to require a sustained effort. However if/when we get out of hypnosis by fate or by grace, true attention comes naturally and effortlessly. We no longer press down on the accelerator and put on the brakes simultaneously. We let go of the driver and his/her illusionary control. And all there is, is this mysterious "Aware-of-Itself-Life" energetic movement, the only matter of this so-called World and Life.

Non-identification with short-lived body sensations/emotions/ thoughts on one side, and true attention - "*awareness reiterating itself*" as per Stephen Jourdain – on the other side, are seen/known as the two sides of the same coin.

And it is about the fullness of Life: "*At zero distance, you are Conscious Emptiness which perceives itself as empty-of-all-things and full-of-all-things.*" Douglas Harding

There are many exercises of remembrance of our true self, practices to become aware of this ever present background, which is in fact "the screen" on which the film of Life is projected. There are also techniques for going back again and again to this immutable Presence, whenever our sense of being a separate individual seems to reappear. All this may be useful. But wouldn't it be wiser to find out what seems to mask this Presence/Awareness? And let the masking thoughts dissolve.

Here is one of my favourite metaphors. Where does the dangerous snake go, when the glow of my torch reveals that what I had mistaken for a snake, was a harmless piece of rope inadvertently fallen onto the ground?

Our common state of inattention is - as I said earlier - quite comparable to being hypnotized during the screening of a film. You completely let go and identify with the characters and the story which take place on the screen. When the film ends and the credit roll, it seems so odd to find your old self sitting there!

It's the same thing with night dreams. What a relief to wake up and find out the tiger did not eat you alive!

Pierre : Speaking of which, it has happened a few times that after a nightmare, I woke up ... only to realize that I only dreamed that I had woken up. Dreamlike Russian dolls in a way. But how can we know and be sure that the dream states have all gone!?

Didier : Nothing is easier. The final stage is no longer in the realm of objects. As long as we locate and identify ourselves in terms of name and form, we live in a dream, however subtle, spiritual and elaborate the dream may be.

If one day, after the end credits have rolled on the screen, your glance at "Pierre-body-mind" does not change the texture or the continuity of the experience, then paradoxically it will be a real change of perspective!

Again, it's the same thing for night dreams. If waking up in your bed in the morning, ready for new adventures, does not change the essence of "your" existence, it will mean that this existence is no longer linked to the phenomenal content of the events that constitute your life.

Existence and Essence will finally be recognized as identical. There can be no further confusion for there is no longer a belief in a relative existence that is "mine" within the very story of what you call "my life".

"You don't wake up, you are awakeness itself. Awareness wakes up to itself. This state is continuous and independent, awareness is simply aware of itself." Jean Klein

There is no continuity of the story, there is only Presence present to itself. Presence/awareness cannot be broken or unbroken for it is not in time and space. Awareness, that is "ourselves", is the one and only "fabric" constituting this magical universe!

<https://www.nondualexplorations.com/publications>

Originally published in the French magazine "3ème millénaire" - Summer 2017.