

Article

The Enigma of Enlightenment

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Abstract

The nature of spiritual enlightenment or awakening from delusion is discussed in the language of modern physics, specifically in terms of the holographic principle of quantum gravity. This gives a deep connection between the nature of science and spirituality, and allows that connection to be seen at a conceptual level. Awakening from delusion is beyond that conceptual level, since it is the direct seeing of that connection between the perceivable world that science conceptually describes and the spiritual source of the consciousness that is perceiving that world.

Keywords: Spiritual enlightenment, awakening, delusion, science, spirituality.

The writings included here document my own ongoing individual journey to awakening, and are not meant to convey any kind of absolute truth. In my own journey, in one hand I held what I felt were valuable scientific principles based on my training in theoretical physics, while in the other hand I held newly discovered nondual concepts that I intuitively knew were pointing toward an absolute truth that I really could not comprehend. The only way I could go forward was to reconcile the scientific principles with the nondual concepts. To a very good approximation, the world we observe is guided by scientific concepts. For example, the magnetic moment of the electron has been theoretically calculated and experimentally measured to an accuracy of about eleven significant figures, and the results of theory and experiment are in total agreement. If nondual concepts are indeed pointers to the absolute truth of reality, they cannot be incompatible with the scientific concepts that at some level appear to govern the world, at least at the probabilistic level of quantum theory. For reasons that may be peculiar to my own journey, I found that I needed to reconcile these apparently incompatible concepts.

Remarkably, almost as soon as I started my journey, I discovered the harmonizing principle, which physicists refer to as the holographic principle. Every time I was stuck on some nondual concept that did not seem compatible with science, I would appeal to the holographic principle and it would come to the rescue with a compatible explanation. Every time I was unable to wrap my mind around some nondual concept, the holographic principle would suggest a way to see beyond that limitation. It was kind of freaky how well the holographic principle reconciled all the concepts. Actually, it worked both ways. Nondual concepts made sense in terms of the holographic principle, and in return, nondual concepts allowed for a deeper understanding of the

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holographic principle. It would seem that at a very deep level the holographic principle is telling us something fundamental about the nature of reality. I have attacked every nondual concept I could discover, from those of Advaita Vedanta to the Taoist tradition to Zen Buddhism, and every time the holographic principle gave a way to reconcile the nondual concept with scientific principles. All I have really done in these ramblings is to document that reconciliation.

If anyone else is interested, they can document it for themselves, but I suspect this peculiar approach is particular to my own individual journey. Since the final destination of the journey is a place without concepts, whatever concepts one holds onto, whether scientific or nondual, must eventually be given up in order to move forward in the journey. Since everything perceived is conceptual, including space and time, this ultimate place without concepts is empty and kind of weird, and isn't a place that one can ever wrap one's conceptual mind around.

A discussion of the nature of concepts is germane to any discussion of the final destination of the journey to enlightenment, which is this very strange place without concepts. In the process of becoming enlightened, one becomes aware of oneself as a self-emanating source of light that illuminates everything in one's world. This is not physical light, but what can best be called the light of consciousness. This experience of oneself can be called the *I Am* or the Atmanic Self. It can also be called the Ascended Self, since when one experiences oneself in this way one sees things from a higher level and with a sense of distance. Even one's own body is seen in this way.

However, this is not the final destination of the journey. One must go further to reach the ultimate place without concepts. It is the going further part of the journey that one can never wrap one's conceptual mind around. The reason for this strange state of affairs is actually pretty easy to explain and understand. In some sense, one's mind is like a screen that is projecting images to the mind's eye, which is perceiving the mental images. The Atmanic Self is not only the mind's eye, but has an outgoing projecting aspect in addition to an incoming perceiving aspect. The outgoing projecting aspect is the light of consciousness that is reflected off the screen of the mind and is illuminating the mind as the projected mental images are perceived by the mind's eye. All the concepts that one perceives are mental images projected from the mental screen through the reflection of one's own light of consciousness back to oneself.

Just like a computer screen projects images, the mental images projected from the mental screen to the mind's eye only arise as configuration states of information encoded on the mental screen, which must be animated in the flow of energy. Just like a computer screen encodes bits of information, the mental screen encodes bits of information. Just like computer images arise as forms of information, mental images arise as forms of information in terms of configuration states of information encoded on the mental screen. Just like computer images are animated as energy flows through the computer, mental images are animated as energy flows through the mind. Just like computer images are projected from a screen to an observer outside the screen, mental images are projected from the mental screen to the mind's eye.

All mental concepts are mentally constructed forms of information energized in the flow of energy. The consciousness of the observer that gives meaning to these mentally constructed forms of information can only do so in the energetic context within which they are constructed. Meaning is always given to concepts in an energetic context, which we intuitively recognize as an emotional context. All meaning is inherently emotional.

The emotional nature of meaning given to concepts has profound implications for the meaning given to belief systems. Although not often recognized, all belief systems begin with a core belief, which is one's belief in oneself. One must believe in oneself before one can believe any belief system. Belief systems are notoriously hard to break because one almost never examines one's core belief in oneself. One's belief in oneself is only a perception of one's emotional state of mind that is called a self-concept, which is inherently body-based. One feels self-limited to the emotionally animated form of one's body as one perceives the flow of emotional energy that animates that form. This emotional perception is at the core of all concepts of self.

This way of understanding the mind as a mental screen is screaming holographic principle. The holographic principle basically says that all the bits of information that describe the configuration states of everything one can perceive in the world are encoded on a bounding surface of space that acts as a holographic screen. These bits of information are the dynamical degrees of freedom that are quantized in quantum theory, which in thermodynamics are called entropy. These bits of information are naturally entangled due to the way they're encoded on a holographic screen. The easiest way to understand the nature of this holographic encoding of bits of information on a bounding surface of space is with non-commutative geometry.

The observer's mental screen not only encodes information for everything perceived in its world in the sense of external sensory perceptions, but also encodes information for all internal mental perceptions, like thoughts and memories. Although one's body is taken to be a boundary between internal and external, everything one perceives in reality is external, as the information for everything, whether taken to be internal or external, is encoded on the observer's holographic screen. There is only a holographic illusion that one internally exists within one's body.

Since everything perceived is external, the perceiving consciousness is impersonal. The person is an organized form of information animated in the flow of energy, like an image projected from a screen to the point of view of an observer outside the screen. The perceiving consciousness of the observer at the central point of view of its world in reality has nothing to do with the person.

Everything one can perceive in the world includes all mental concepts constructed in the mind, including the concept of self. Everything one can perceive in the world also includes the nature of all elementary particles and the dynamical nature of space-time geometry. In a very deep sense, everything one can perceive in the world, including space-time geometry, is conceptual. Mental concepts are only like the tip of the iceberg.

It is fairly easy to show the dynamical nature of space-time geometry in any bounded region of space, which is the nature of gravity, is a thermodynamic consequence of the holographic way bits of information are encoded on the bounding surface of that space. The usual unification mechanisms of modern physics like super-symmetry and the Kaluza-Klein mechanism then give a natural explanation for how all other fundamental forces and all fundamental particles arise from that dynamical space-time geometry as extra components of the space-time metric. Since the dynamical space-time geometry of the bounded space is derivative of the holographic principle, none of the so-called fundamental forces or particles are really fundamental.

Everything one can perceive in the world, which includes the dynamical nature of space-time geometry, is a form of information, which means it is all conceptual. Mental concepts are also forms of information. All the bits of information for everything that can be perceived in the world, including space-time geometry, are encoded on a bounding surface of space that acts as a holographic screen. The mind understood as a mental screen is another aspect of that holographic screen. The holographic screen is fundamentally a bounding surface of space that encodes bits of information and limits the observer's observations of things in space, like an event horizon. Forms of information are like images projected from the screen to an observer outside the screen that is perceiving the images. When the observer becomes enlightened, the observer also sees that it is its own light of consciousness that is projecting the images, like the light of a movie projector that projects movie images as that light is reflected off the screen.

An enlightened observer that sees all of this is the nature of the Atmanic or Ascended Self, but that is not the final destination of the journey to enlightenment. The final destination is the ultimate place without concepts. One must go further than the Atmanic Self, which is the highest 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 the observer's observations. 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. 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 no observer. When there is no limitation of a mind or holographic screen, the highest level of self, the Atmanic Self, no longer exists, but consciousness does not stop existing.

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 Maharaj also discusses this doorway and the need to cleanse oneself of the sense of self before passing through the doorway. In *I Am That*, Nisargadatta says "*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.

In the journey to enlightenment, one brings oneself to this doorway as one focuses one's attention on one's own sense of being present or beingness. Being present at the doorway means 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. 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, the *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 to enlightenment is always taken by a self in a time-bound world, but this 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 world, which is the highest level of consciousness one can have while one is present to observe one's world. The gate only opens or becomes gateless when one becomes selfless.

The grail legend is a 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 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 focus of attention away from one's life as a person in the world and shifts one's focus of 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. Such a thing does not really exist. Living a life in the world is only about creating a false self. One is actually creating a false self through one's false belief in it, and that creation process is inherently emotional. Awakening from delusion is only a process of giving up the desire to create this false self so that one can discover one's true being. This discovery can only be made when one is without a sense of self.

In the journey to awakening, one can only go further if one kills the Buddha. The Buddha is the highest sense of self, the ascended Atmanic Self at the central point of singularity, which is the highest level of consciousness one can have while one still perceives one's 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 and glorified that self might be. The goal of the journey is not to become a high and mighty self, but to become selfless. One is only done when one is truly selfless.

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 that when everything in one's world disappears from existence, including one's 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 to enlightenment, the ultimate place with no 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 undifferentiated or undivided, it is one. In the sense of being formless or nothingness, it can be called emptiness or void. In the sense of being the source of Atmanic consciousness, it is the source of the light of consciousness, but in-and-of-itself, it can only be described 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 relationship can only exist at the level of the Atmanic Self. All subject-object relations inherently relate a 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 experiencing a subject-object relation cannot be another perceivable self-replicating form of information or object that it perceives in its world, but can only be a presence of Atmanic consciousness perceiving objects in its world. The perceivable objects are organized forms of information projected like images from a mental screen to the point of view of the perceiving consciousness outside the screen 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 the perceivable objects in any perceivable world, which is the presence of Atmanic consciousness at the central point of view of its own perceivable world.

There are no subject-object relations in Brahmanic consciousness, as there is nothing to perceive. There is no self and there is no other in Brahmanic consciousness. There is only one undivided,

unlimited, unchanging, nondual awareness, which in some inexpressible sense is undivided awareness aware of nothing more than its own true undivided, unchanging and unlimited 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 unlimited 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.

Mooji recently commented 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. Nisargadatta would say that the only thing that ever stops one from recognizing the truth is delusion, essentially all the lies and false beliefs one believes about oneself that get in the way of seeing the truth. He would say only these false beliefs need to be removed in order to see the truth. Both of them would say that it is only one's focus of attention on the false belief of a personal identity, like a hypnotic spell that one is under that monopolizes one's attention, that 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 one 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 believes about oneself. One believes that 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 and 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 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.

In the creative process of manifesting a world, a presence of Atmanic consciousness naturally identifies itself with its creation due to its perception of the flow of energy that gives rise to feelings of self-limitation to its creation. Since creation is fundamentally a conceptual process in terms of organization of forms of information on a mental screen, animation of forms in the flow of energy, projection of forms to an observer's point of view, and perception of forms by the observer, this creative process inevitably leads to the emotional construction of a concept of self the observer identifies itself with as it projects and perceives concepts from its mental screen.

The essential problem of awakening is that awakening can never occur at the same conceptual level at which the self-concept is created. Awakening always requires consciousness to ascend to a higher level, as things are seen with a sense of distance and detachment. The only way the self-concept can ever be transcended is through the ascension of consciousness to a higher level.

This important point cannot be stressed strongly enough. The self-concept is inherently life-form based. The only way to understand how the self-concept is emotionally constructed in the mind is to understand how life-forms are emotionally organized in the world. Life-forms are organized forms of information that are energetically animated over a sequence of perceivable events. The key point is life-forms are coherently organized forms of information that self-replicate their forms or hold together in a recognizable way over a sequence of perceivable events.

The ability of a coherently organized life-form to self-replicate its form is inherently dependent on emotional expressions. The only way life-forms can self-replicate their forms or survive in a recognizable form over a sequence of perceivable events is if they express emotions of fear and desire. Life-forms are only able to maintain their coherent organization if they add organizing potential energy to their forms through a process called eating. A life-form must have a source of organizing potential energy from which it feeds or adds energy to its form. For many life-forms, this process of adding potential energy to its form means the life-form must eat other life-forms.

The need to add organizing potential energy to a form through a process of eating in order to maintain the state of organization of that form in a recognizable form is a direct consequence of the disorganization of forms that occurs as heat flows in a thermal gradient. Heat is randomized kinetic energy. As heat flows, thermal energy tends to disorganize forms. Forms tend to fly apart due to the randomized motions of their constituents. The only thing that holds the form together as a coherently organized self-replicating form is the potential energy of attractive forces. The life-form must feed upon a source of potential energy to maintain the organization of its form.

This actually gives a good definition of life-forms. A life-form is a self-replicating coherently organized form of information that must feed upon a source of energy in order to maintain the state of its organization in a recognizable form over a sequence of perceivable events. By this definition, a hurricane is a life-form. Not only must a life-form eat other forms in order to self-replicate form and survive as a recognizable form, but the life-form must also avoid being eaten by other forms. What is called death is only an unrecognizable disorganization of form.

For many life-forms, a life-form can only survive in the world if it eats other life-forms. This need to eat in order to self-replicate form is the basic nature of desire. The flip side of the desire to eat is the fear of being eaten. In simplest biological terms, life-forms only survive in the world or self-replicate their forms if they eat other life-forms and avoid being eaten by other life-forms. The fear of death is really nothing more than fear of an unrecognizable disorganization of form.

The biological need to self-replicate form over a sequence of perceivable events is even a more basic need than the biological need for reproduction of form. Self-replication of form must occur

from moment to moment, and is totally dependent on eating and the avoidance of being eaten. At the most fundamental level of biological survival, the emotional expression of desire expresses the need to eat and the emotional expression of fear expresses the need to avoid being eaten.

The basic problem is the emotional expressions of desire and fear are in conflict with each other. The expressed desire to eat by a life-form expresses movement toward whatever it desires to eat, while the expressed fear of being eaten by a life-form expresses movement away from or against whatever desires to eat that life-form. Movement toward is always an expression of emotional attachment, while movement away from or against is an expression of self-defensiveness. The expression of desire always expresses some kind of emotional attachment of one form to another form, while the expression of fear always expresses some kind of self-defensiveness as one form defends itself against another form. By their very nature, emotional attachments are in conflict with self-defensive expressions. Movement toward is always in conflict with movement away.

The expression of desire is always in conflict with the expression of fear. The desire to eat is always in conflict with the fear of being eaten. This is an unavoidable consequence of life-forms surviving in the world, which at the most basic level is the self-replication of form from moment to moment. This emotional conflict is the basic nature of the survival of the fittest form.

The mentally constructed self-concept is life-form based and emotionally energized by the same emotional expressions of fear and desire. By its very nature, the construction of a self-concept in the mind is in emotional conflict. These emotional conflicts are the inherent nature of life-forms surviving in the world, and are also the inherent nature of self-concepts surviving in the mind.

The self-concept is always constructed in the mind as an emotionally energized thought. This self-concept thought is always self-referential, as a life-form based self-image is emotionally related to the image of some other thing that appears in the world one perceives. The emotional relationships of the self-concept are also life-form based in terms of the expression of fear and desire that in some way defend the survival of the life-form in the sense of self-replication of form. The perceiving one only identifies itself with that self-image due to its perception of the emotional flow of energy through that form that makes it feel self-limited to that form.

The perceiving one is recognizing that form as the form self-replicates form over a sequence of perceivable events. This recognition is inherently emotional in nature due to the expression of fear and desire by the life-form, which is necessary for life-form survival. The perceiving one can only identify itself with the life-form due to this emotional self-recognition. This emotional self-recognition comes to an end with death and the unrecognizable disorganization of form.

This process of emotional recognition and self-identification always occurs at the conceptual level of the mental construction of a life-form based self-concept. This emotional recognition is inherently conflicted, since the expression of fear is in conflict with the expression of desire. The perceiving one can never transcend its self-concept at the same conceptual level that it is created since the emotional conflicts are inherently unresolvable at that conceptual level. As long as the

perceiving one perceives things at the conceptual level the self-concept is constructed, it will feel compelled to defend the survival of its self-concept as though its existence depends on it.

The self-concept can never be transcended at the same conceptual level that it is created. That creation process is inherently emotional, and is plagued by emotional conflicts. Emotional conflicts are never resolved at the same level that they are created. The only way to resolve emotional conflicts is to see them from a higher level with a sense of distance and detachment. Only the consciousness that ascends to a higher level and sees things with a sense of detachment can resolve emotional conflicts as it transcends its self-concept.

The awakening process always begins down in the trenches at a conceptual level. Concepts are used to attack the self-concept and demonstrate its inherent falseness. The self-concept can never really be destroyed through a conceptual attack, but that is how the process must begin.

For the awakening process to go forward, this conceptual attack on the self-concept has to be combined with surrender and detachment. The emotional energy of the self-concept is inherently in conflict with itself, as the desire to move toward and attach itself to things is in conflict with the fear of other things and the desire to defend itself against other things expressed as movement away and against. The only way the self-concept can really be transcended is if these emotional conflicts are resolved and come to an end. Only surrender and detachment can resolve them.

Surrender deals with self-defensive expressions, especially the self-defensive desire to control things, which inherently involves emotional bias in the focus of attention. This desire to control things in a personally biased or self-defensive way is a denial of death that arises from the fear of death. When one identifies oneself with form, death is equated with nonexistence, and so the fear of death turns into fear of nonexistence. When one feels one is able to control things, one feels powerful, which is a way of denying death. The problem is nothing can really be controlled as events are inherently unpredictable, and this feeling of being in control is illusory.

The irony is that death is inherently illusory, as death is only an unrecognizable disorganization of form. The perceiving one that recognizes a form and identifies itself with that form does not really die when that form appears to die and is no longer recognizable. The desire to control and have power over things in a denial of death is just as illusory as the death that is denied.

The whole sense of doership or personal agency is illusory. The self-replicating form of a person is animated by the same forces that animate the entire observable universe. To a limited degree, emotional bias in one's focus of attention can affect how a person acts, but this emotional effect is always limited in space and time, and cannot really alter the universal flow of things. At most, the emotional expressions of a person limited in space and time can only create a disturbance in the normal flow of things. The feeling of being in control is only an illusion of the self-concept.

The only way one can ever transcend the illusions of control and doership is through surrender and detachment, which is ultimately how emotional conflicts of the self-concept are transcended.

The desire to move toward and attach oneself to things is transcended as one severs emotional attachments, and the desire to control things and defend oneself is transcended as one surrenders.

With surrender, one gives up the desire to control things and simply accepts things as they are every moment without any desire to change anything. One puts one's trust in the normal flow of things to sort out what is for the best and just allows things to play out in the normal way. With detachment, one becomes willing to let go and sever one's emotional attachments to things and just allow things to come and go without any desire to hold onto or possess things. The result of surrender and detachment is the ascension of consciousness to a higher level, as one sees things with a sense of distance and detachment. This way of seeing things is called witnessing.

The ascension of consciousness to a higher level is how emotional conflicts of the self-concept are ultimately resolved and transcended. The conceptual process of negation of the self-concept turns into the direct seeing of the illusory nature of the self-concept. Through surrender and detachment, the negation of the self-concept turns into disillusionment. Once the self-concept is directly seen to be an illusion, one loses interest in it and no longer focuses one's attention on it as though one's existence depends on its survival. As one withdraws one's focus of attention away from it, one also withdraws one's investment of emotional energy in it that is needed to emotionally construct and animate it. Without that emotional energy of emotional attachment and self-defense, the self-concept is no longer emotionally animated and dies a natural death.

At the same time that one withdraws one's focus of attention away from one's self-concept, one must also have the willingness to shift one's focus of attention onto one's own sense of beingness or being present, so that one can come to know oneself as a pure presence of consciousness. One comes to know oneself as Atmanic consciousness. Once this shift in one's focus of attention is stabilized on one's own beingness, the awakening process can go forward to its final conclusion.

As one shifts and stabilizes one's focus of attention on one's own sense of beingness, one comes to know oneself as one really is. Without one's attention focused on the life of the person in the world that one takes oneself to be as one perceives that world, one's mind becomes silent as one stops emotionally constructing a 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 it and stops paying attention to it. With a silent mind one also becomes aware of the inherent stillness and silence of the space from which one observes things. One goes deeper into this stillness and silence as one focuses one's attention on one's own sense of beingness.

In the process of awakening from the delusional state of believing that one is a person in the world one perceives, one first comes to know oneself as the detached, impartial, silent observer of that world, which is often called the detached witness. With witnessing, one perceives things from a higher level, with a sense of distance and detachment. One becomes aware of the stillness and silence of the space from which one perceives things. The things that one perceives are like

passing clouds in the sky that one only perceives as they pass by. One becomes aware of one's own sense of being present or beingness as the presence of consciousness that perceives things.

This highest sense of self in the sense of a subject-object relation is often referred to as the born again experience. One dies to one's false self-identification with one's body-based personal sense of self and is reborn to the spiritual identity of a presence of consciousness. 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 or subject-object relation in the nondual awareness that is the source of consciousness.

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 beingness.

Only the Atmanic consciousness has a sense of self and other and a sense of subject and object. In the source of consciousness there is no sense of self and other and no sense of subject and object, only one undivided awareness aware of nothing but its one undivided true nature. The Atmanic consciousness of the observer observing its own observable world is divided from its source as it expresses a sense of self-ness, subjective-ness, and I-Am-ness. In its dividedness, it feels self-limited to form and emotionally identifies itself with a person in the world it perceives.

Its emotional self-identification with the emotionally animated form of a person is twisted, since it consists of nothing more than false beliefs it believes about itself. That false belief is conceptual. Its self-concept is an emotionally energized animated form of information its mind constructs about itself and emotionally projects back to itself like an image projected from a screen. The whole thing is twisted since the image can only be projected if the observer focuses its attention on it, which it only does because it really believes it is the self-image it perceives.

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

The 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 its believing that false belief 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 reach or know that truth. The person can only disappear from existence. It is the consciousness itself that must stop believing the twisted false belief that it believes about itself that it is a person.

The only real power the consciousness has is its focus of attention. The consciousness must withdraw its attention away from the life of the person in the world to the point the person and its world disappear from existence. The only reason the consciousness will ever do this is if it sees the life of the person in the world is an illusion of what it really is and loses interest in paying attention to an illusion. The consciousness must simultaneously shift the focus of its attention onto its own sense of beingness and being present. The consciousness is only an observer that is observing things. The only real power the consciousness has is its focus of attention as it chooses what to observe in its world. This is a limited power as it chooses what things to 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.

The first thing awakening from delusion proves is that everything exists within consciousness. From the point of view of a presence of consciousness, everything in its world appears to come into existence if that conscious presence is present to observe things, and everything in its world disappears from existence if that conscious presence is not present to observe things. Being present requires the presence of consciousness to focus its attention on whatever it observes.

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 difference between deep sleep and awakening from delusion is with awakening from delusion one focuses one's attention on one's own sense of beingness 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. Just 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, and 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, which could be called the ground of being, but is really just the ultimate reality of the dreamer's existence.

The journey to awakening is only a process of breaking the hypnotic spell of personal identity. The only real power one has to break this hypnotic spell is one's focus of attention, which is how one makes choices. One breaks the hypnotic spell of personal identity by choosing to negate the false belief in personal identity, which always requires a shift in the focus of one's attention. One negates the false belief by shifting one's attention on one's own sense of beingness. The negation process narrows down the issue of choice to a single question: Who am I?

The paradox is when one becomes enlightened and knows what one really is, one also knows what one isn't. One isn't a person in the world one perceives. The truth of what one is sets one free from the bondage of personal self-identification. Ultimately, one has no need to live a life in that world, and need not even be present to perceive that world. One is always free to choose to exist as nothingness. An enlightened being can just as easily answer the Who am I question with I am not as with I am.

Everything written here is only a movement toward that final seeing and knowing, which paradoxically is known as knowing nothing. Everything written here is written in that spirit of being nothing and knowing nothing, which paradoxically is the ultimate knowledge.

A Note on the References:

The references listed below are divided into scientific and nondual references. These writings are not really scientific articles, and as such need no formal system of reference, but are more like a contemplative expression of my own personality. Maybe the better description is a creative expression of the universe through the particular instrument of my personality. At least that's how it felt as things were written. The references were instrumental in that creative expression and had an important influence on the final result of how these ideas came together.

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