

All Is One

By Richard Harvey

The most basic assumption of human existence is surely the belief in yourself as a person. Through spiritual practice this belief is negated. Spiritually you are not a person, but humanly or psychologically you are. From the point of view of divine, transcendent, and spiritual understanding you do not exist as a separate being. Yet from the point of view of this relative world, the world of time and space, of changing conditions, good and evil, light and dark, and day and night, you are a separate, divided, identifiable human. Essentially it's an us-and-them situation and inherently a conflict: you struggle or strive to survive, to exist, to get food and shelter, love and belonging, status and resources, to accommodate you and provide for your needs and desires, and, if you are fortunate, for your excesses, your luxuries, and the farther edges of your various appetites.

Whatever luck or good fortune you have in this life, at some point you are gone, finished. You pass the screen of death to we-know-not-what and oblivion or heaven or purgatory or something awaits – or maybe there's nothing at all. It is a cause for concern perhaps, but not to waste too much time on, because there's living to do, piling up experiences, stockpiling perceived virtues, wealth, and achievements.

Spiritual beings are self-evidently nuts, of course – merely crazy people and we most certainly would never behave like them. Take Nisargadatta: when he was asked, Who are you? he replies, I was never born. What about Jesus? When he was asked, Who are you? he says, I am the light of the world. Oh dear me, this is getting worse! Or Buddha when asked the same question, he replies, Awake! And Bodhidharma, when asked by the Emperor Wu of Liang – who incidentally had just built a huge franchise of Zen monasteries in China and been informed by Bodhidharma that his generosity amounted to nothing, because the supreme truth was “vast emptiness” – when he is asked the same question, Who are you? he replies, I know not.

We tend to practice spirituality in a saner way today; not too far out or ahead of ourselves. We fain humility and play down our spiritual accomplishments and don't try to get too full of ourselves or sound off for fear of appearing egoistic.

Yet we are magnificent. We are light beings, beings of light which means consciousness and that is exactly what we are; extraordinary beings of light and consciousness, capable of the most amazing feats and miracles. Our ticket to the other side, to the land of reality, the plane of light and consciousness, where we discover who we are in reality, is paid for with one single coin and that coin is marked “everything you think you are.” For when we have shed that mask, the limitations of thought, an image or idea of ourselves, a suggestion, an assumption and un-reality, it becomes clear to us that we are sacred, creative, wise, empowered, miraculous, gifted, incredibly sublimely multifaceted, engaged in a plethora of worlds, acting simultaneously in multiple realms, staggeringly intuitive, empathetic and... compassionate.

But spiritually we are neither identifiable nor separate, nor definable, nor divided individual entities. How is this? What truth does it convey? How are we to live this essential insight of spirituality?

When she was little, my daughter asked a question at the dinner table. It was one of those wise questions bathed in innocence that seemed divinely profound and reminiscent of the dictum, "out of the mouths of babes." She asked, "How was Spain made?" Now this is a profound question, isn't it? While I was reeling from the ramifications of this insightful enquiry, my wife began an account of Spain's origins. Of course there was the cultural, political, historical, religious, economic, prehistoric, and evolutionary ways of approaching the question too. But all these modes of explanation only seemed to emphasize the fact that no real answer exists. No amount of words necessarily means that what is being described is real.

I recalled the spiritual master Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj expounding on the notion of the self. He said that you are just like the city of Bombay and asked, Can you carry Bombay home with you? How was Spain made? Can you carry Bombay home? In other words, is it definable? How can we define ourselves by separation and division? What sort of definition do you give to a tacitly agreed object that does not strictly speaking exist separate from everything else?

It's like my childhood experience of Exmouth, Devon, England where I was partly raised. If you are a parent, an uncle or aunt, or family friend you must know that measurement is the child's idea of induction into the adult mysteries. How far is it? How tall am I? How big is 6' 4"? All these questions along with being timed dashing from one end of the beach to the other are profound excitements in early life. We see the invisible boundary, the wide-eyed excitement about how long, how far, how deep, where anything begins and where it ends. Descending into a little dip of tree-lined houses with the sparkling estuary to your left and the street-lights lined up on both sides of the road stood a large white sign with a picture of flowers on it that read, You are now leaving Exmouth. Driving from the other direction you viewed the opposite side of the sign that welcomed you to Exmouth. In my early years I used to look out of the car window and try to imagine what invisible dividing line existed to give this message credibility. After all what did it mean really to be in or out of Exmouth?

You and I are like Spain or Exmouth... or Bombay. There are many explanations for us, and there are none. In the end we have agreed to look at it all a certain way, to adopt certain conventions and content ourselves with the separation that ensues. But this separation, while commonsensical from the practical everyday point of view, is a spiritual fallacy. You and I are not what we appear to be. You and I are not even separate. Even when we speak of the spiritual, it is in a sense spiritual nonsense, while being a relative reality. Of course, we do it in good humor and fundamental humility. But relativity, time and space, is not the deepest, most profound truth. That is reserved for expression by the great realizers. We ask: Who are you? Who am I? and they reply: I was never born, I am the Light of the World, Awake! and I know not.

I was never born means that I am not of this world, not subject to time and space, but of eternity. What is eternal is consciousness. I am the Light of the world. Light is consciousness and consciousness is light. Jesus is saying I am consciousness. Awake says Buddha, awaken to what? I was asleep, otherwise what could awake mean. I become aware and awareness is the individual expression of timeless consciousness in the temporal realms, so awake means to become conscious. And I know not? Since I am consciousness itself, of what can I be aware, since I am everything and everything is myself. I am in form or formlessness, an unselfconscious unknowing that can never be aware of itself: I am all and All is Consciousness. So each of these wise sayings of the great realizers amount to the same thing. Each individual set of words is identical in meaning, the spiritual message is perennial and clear: I am All and

everything, eternal Consciousness, not this body, not this life, not this individuality or self-identified, separative self, or egocentric division. I am you and you are me: we are all continuous – one Consciousness with no boundary.

This article is an excerpt from Richard Harvey's book [Your Divine Opportunity](#).