

Awareness: The Central Spiritual Practice

By Richard Harvey

Awareness is at once our central spiritual practice, since nothing is possible without awareness, and our real nature in Truth. Awareness is where it all starts. Awareness is our natural state. Awareness means that we lead our lives fundamentally happy in compassion, peace and vibrant relationship, acting, thinking and feeling wisely, centered, authentically and joyfully.

When we fall out of awareness, we become angry or fearful or sad about ourselves and our lives. We forget what it means to be aware and how that experience of life feels. This natural state of awareness refers us to the bigger picture, the more expansive questions about existence that we human beings wonder about. What is life? What particularly is a human life? How should we live? What is death? The condition of wonderment that gives rise to these questions is itself a blessing. To live our lives in wonder is simple and profound. It is both a royal road to living in the Mystery and the acknowledgment that life is never and can never be entirely knowable. As the events of your life, through good and bad fortunes, dramas, and vicissitudes unfold, you stand in the middle of all of it immersed in love and happiness, because deep down inside in your true nature you are whole. All of it is you, death and rebirth, good and evil, day and night in its many modifications and adaptations, beckoning you, even while you resist identifying with it, with all of it or any of it.

The goal of awareness, from the human point of view, is to raise our consciousness of mind, body, emotions, and energy, as well as further realms of experience, particularly the realms of heart and compassion. The goal of awareness, from the transcendent-spiritual point of view, is no-mind, no-thought, non-awareness, where we are merged with the Divine Person in satchitananda.(1)

Awareness and attention are essentially the same. Awareness is attention given focus and attention is the expression of love. Awareness is love in action. Now how do you live with this... as this... honoring this?

Have you ever looked up at a mountain? When you look up at a mountain you see variations of color and texture, of light and dark, depth and crevices and flat, steep, wooded and clear areas; all is variation, all is differences and the composition of the mountain as you look up is diverse, rich, beautiful, and powerful; a complex composition of Nature. Climb this mountain and look back down, not at the wonderful view the top of the mountain offers, but at the mountain itself, and all is lofty, high, exalted, and powerful. But the difference is that as you look down now, as opposed to up, your mountain appears unified, after you have conquered it through climbing. From the top, the mountain is one, a unity.

And this is how it is with spiritual endeavor. You read words like, "Awareness is love in action and the highest form of love is devotion" and you think: Wow, how will I ever be able to do this? What is it I am meant to do? Perhaps it is impossible, not meant for someone like me. Because it is like looking up at the mountain: all you can see is details, all you can see is the complexity – what behaviors you have to change, what assumptions you have to drop, what lack of awareness you have to overcome, what emotions control you, what relationships rule you, how you lose your power, what neuroses you have to

shed, what fears, obsessions, fixations, and fetishes you have to get rid of. So before you even start, everything is detail, varied, complex, and overwhelming.

When you are ready to work with this, start by defocusing your awareness. Breathe, don't focus on the details or the enormity of the task ahead, focus on the present and the quality of your attention here-now. Then... breathe, then breathe again, and center yourself. Let words like awareness, love, and devotion grow in you and know that it gets easier, it becomes simpler, it will not always be as it is now, and you will discover a marvelous deep well of guidance and love within you. You are coming home. In reality there is nothing easier. It is immensely powerful. You have to try very hard and put in tremendous effort not to live as love and devotion and awareness. Shedding what you are doing to prevent your naturalness arising in every moment is a fulltime task. So simplify everything, breathe, live, enjoy life, breathe again, remain aware, do less, feel more, be still, and in the gaps, in the spaces between, you will cultivate the ground of emergence in which love and awareness and devotion will grow and flower, spontaneously and naturally.

- (1) Literally, being, consciousness, bliss, the Sanskrit word satchitananda describes the subjective Divine state or condition of boundless, pure consciousness.

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