

Regarding mind and Brahman ...

I've never quite bought the idea that the world is a dream, mind unreal and thoughts just projections, clouds that float across the sun to be dismissed as mere shadows, distractions, entanglements.

Ordinary waking consciousness is itself a dream because in ordinary waking consciousness, we do not see things as they are. We see ourselves as separate, identified with and defined by whatever the little "me" has attached to. In ordinary waking consciousness, I am these relationships, this profession, these accomplishments, these possessions, this reputation, this personality, this body ... and everything else is "not me."

We see things as solid, separate objects, material "things" that are distinct from other material things. Things bang into other things, rebound like billiard balls and then bang into more things in a cascade of seemingly discrete encounters that appear to us as "cause and effect."

This is the world of Newtonian physics, of matter and energy, a clockwork universe. But there is an Einsteinian world, a universe of infinite quantum fields where matter and energy are not separate, and there are no separate "objects." There is a single underlying reality that appears as myriad different things but really is fundamentally one, undivided field. That is what the modern understanding of physics, quantum field theory, superstrings, tells us.

And that is what we awaken to.

Knowledge is different in different states of consciousness. Reality is different in different states of consciousness. Each state of consciousness has its own knowledge, its own reality that is true, authentic and valid for that state of consciousness, but not true, authentic and valid for another.

A teaching may be true or useful in one state of consciousness, but no longer true or useful after we have awakened to the next state of consciousness. We create problems for ourselves if we try to apply the truths of one state of consciousness to another state of consciousness where they are not true.

People do this all the time.

We do it when we try to apply the truths of an awakened state of consciousness to ordinary waking consciousness. We may tell ourselves, "I am not the mind, I am not my thoughts, I am not the little 'me' that imagines it is a separate thing," and it is all right to tell ourselves that.

But we cannot awaken ourselves to the *reality* that our true identity is not the mind, thoughts, the little "me" by simply telling ourselves it is so. We may attach ourselves to this effort. We may persist dogmatically toward a purely mental construction of what we imagine awakening should be. We may convince ourselves intellectually, psychologically, that the mind is unreal, even that the little "me" doesn't exist.

And we may hypnotize ourselves into thinking we have awakened where no actual awakening has happened. In doing that, we may drive ourselves into a state of dissociation. We may find ourselves

stranded in a no man's land where we have severed our connection with the world, severed our connection with our own mind, personality and feelings, without recourse to the infinite transcendental Self that is beyond them and is what we really are.

Awakening is exactly what the word means. We *awaken* into a completely different state of consciousness, a completely different world. We cannot awaken ourselves from a dream simply by dreaming about waking. And we cannot transcend the relative mind, we cannot arrive at the infinite, unbounded source of thought, the eternal, transcendental Self, simply by thinking about how unreal the relative mind must be.

We may awaken into an intermediate state of consciousness, where we have found ourselves to be the witness, the infinite eternal Self deep within, silent, separate and untouched by the world, where the mind, ego, little "me" are no longer imagined to be true self. In that intermediate stage, the mind, thoughts, little "me" may seem clearly to be illusory, transient. We don't merely believe or understand they are illusory; we *see* it. But, real as that seeing is, true and valid for that stage of awakening, it is only an intermediate stage.

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As we continue to awaken, we may continue to tell ourselves, "the mind is unreal, thoughts are only projections" But when awakening has matured into unity, into Brahman consciousness, which sees all things are Self and there is nothing that is not Self, then *everything* is real.

Here, the universe that is Brahman consciousness is discovered to be a magical, enchanted world where everything is made of consciousness, everything is alive.

Each thing, each encounter, exchange, movement, sensation, thought, emotion, perception ... is part of an infinitely complex, beautiful and perfect dance. All becomes a perfectly choreographed interplay of Self interacting, *dancing* with Self. Universal Self dancing with individual self. Universal, infinite Self dancing with universal, infinite Self as it somehow, impossibly, moves in *this* place, sees from *these* eyes, from *my* eyes, here in this place, in *my* place, and sees itself, discovers itself, worships itself, *me*, in every form, everywhere throughout time and space and eternity.

"Brahman is the act of offering. Brahman the oblation poured by Brahman into fire that is Brahman. To Brahman alone must he go who is fixed in Brahman through action."

~ Bhagavad Gita ch. 4, v. 24

Everything becomes synchronicity. Everything becomes meaningful, purposeful. No longer does anything appear to "cause" anything else. Or it may be seen that any pair of "cause and effect" can be interchanged. "This only happened as a result of that" is just as easily seen as "That only happened so it could result in this."

“The enlightened knower of Brahman knows the unity of cause and effect.” Everything perfectly fits. Everything is real. The world is real. The mind is real. Thoughts are real. The little “me” is real.

“Only Brahman is real.”

And it is all Brahman. The world is Brahman. The mind is Brahman. Thoughts are Brahman. The little “me” is Brahman.

But if we have attached ourselves to the idea that “the mind is unreal, thoughts are only projections ...,” that attitude may persist even after awakening to unity. We may shut ourselves out from fully living Brahman consciousness. Out of habit, we may stand frozen in an attitude of aloof dismissal, on the sideline, while the universe dances without us.

That is the enlightenment a great many people imagine. That is the enlightenment a great many people pursue, hypnotically questing for a pristine, perfectly uninvolved, flat, monochrome, worldless, mindless, thoughtless, egoless, “me”-less ... “enlightenment” they will never achieve, that no one ever *can* achieve.

And in that questing, they will miss the enlightenment that is their birthright. They will miss the enlightenment they may have already awakened to. They will miss their own enlightenment if they persist in imagining they are still dreaming, if they cling to a dogmatic preconception of what enlightenment is supposed to be, and never look at the reality that is before their eyes.

And here is part of the magic.

In Brahman consciousness, there is still some residue of mental projection, illusion, dreaminess. This is necessary so universal, infinite Self can do that impossible thing of seeing from *here*, through *these* eyes, *my* eyes, *me*. There has to be enough illusion of separateness to maintain that sense of a little “me” who is in this place, here.

Only thus, through the dream within awakening that there is still a little “me,” can Brahman *dance* with Brahman: Brahman the offering, Brahman the oblation, Brahman the fire into which Brahman is poured. There are not four Brahman performing this celebration. Only one. Brahman alone is real. Brahman alone is, but through the residue of dream that allows a sense of multiplicity to persist, Brahman interacts with Brahman.

Still there will be a personality with quirks and foibles, issues and habits that carry along from before and continue calling to us for transformation.

It can be a bit disorienting when this doesn’t match our preconception of what enlightenment is supposed to be. Many who encounter this assume it means they are not enlightened, and they try relentlessly to extinguish the residue of their own individuality.

They take that residue of dreaminess to mean they are still asleep. But they are not asleep. After awakening to Brahman, it becomes a *lucid* dream.

After awakening to Brahman, if we are able to release our preconceptions, we see the residue of dreaminess for what it is. We know it is a dream, and we simultaneously know it is nothing but Brahman dreaming within Brahman. In fact, it is a divine dream. It is *the* divine dream. Fully awake, even to our own dreaming, we see, we immerse ourselves in the exquisite dance.

Without the residue of dream, we could not dance, Brahman could not dance within us, we could not dance within Brahman. Brahman could not pour Brahman into the fire that is Brahman. This is the exquisite dance of an awakened human life. It is the divine, exquisite dance of the universal infinite Self, the source and fulfillment of all that is.

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