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THE ONE AT PLAY: AWAKENING TO I AM BEING ME

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Concepts connote, symbols denote. All this is the stuff of Reality--so we think. Yet a small group of people, often ridiculed as mad, say this is not so. These mystics, saints and sages point to a dimensionless reality transcending our cognitive mind. The rest of us, unable to measure this reality or perceive it with our senses and science, ignore or deny it. Mystics say that reality affirms itself in degrees without ceasing to be one. This means that self-reference (in the sense that reality is the One knowing itself) is the Principle of the Universe. Reality is what is--and this is the One. According to the Upanishads, Brahman is the One, without a second. Mystics recognize that self-reference is the Principle of the Universe. Below are some aphorisms of mystics concerning the self-reference principle:

-Enlightenment is merely the Immaculate looking naturally at itself.
-Illusion meets illusion: Truth itself.
-Truth is not learned, it is recognized.
-Knowledge is the self-illumination of being.
-Man is what Mind knows of itself.
-True knowledge is not attained by thinking. It is what you are; it is what you become.
-The Absolute is the process of its own becoming, the circle which presupposes its end as its purpose and has its end as its beginning. It becomes concrete or actual only by its development and through its end.

Paradox is self-reference in a nutshell. It is the bridge between the eye of reason and the eye of contemplation. The humour it necessarily evokes opens "the third eye" to see the One at play. There are many paradoxes and perhaps no contradictions. A paradox is apparently self-contradictory, but true. It is true because reality never ceases to be one. The so-called problems of the One and the Many and of the self and the Self are paradoxes. Take the Mobius strip. (A Mobius strip is a twisted surface in space formed by turning one side of a rectangle through 180° (relative to the opposite side) and joining it to its opposite side (as contrasted with a cylinder which is formed simply by joining a rectangle's unturned sides).) As a symbol it demonstrates the sort of quirky, paradoxical humour revealing that reason, by following its own logic, comes to an impasse of its own creating. To the casual eye there appears to be two edges to the Mobius strip. In fact there is only one. The casual eye assumes two and thereby betrays reality. So it is with the One and many and the Self/self paradoxes. Duality disappears when viewed by the eye of contemplation.

The Muslim mystic, Kabir, said: "Behold the One in all things; it is the second that leads you astray." Language often locks up profound truths. In Indo-European languages, the root meaning of "two" connotes badness. The Greek prefix "dys" (as in dyspepsia) and the Latin "dis" (as in dishonourable), as well as the cognate "bis" in French (as in "bevue" = twosight) reveal this fundamental meaning. To doubt or to be dubious is to have a double mind or to be divided. Slang speaks of two-timers.

The Chinese philosophical principle of Yin and Yang is sometimes misunderstood. By exposing explicit dualism it always points to the implicit underlying unity, for yin and yang lovingly embrace each other in a circle of wholeness. This means that what we perceive as

process and substance, subject and object, cause and effect, theory and practice, understanding and demonstration, even doing and being--is one. A belief in a second is just that--belief and believer are one, and that one is belief. Remember the Mobius strip!

The One is perfection being perfect. As such it is **I AM**. I AM is the declaration of Being being itself. I is the whole and AM is being. There is only one way for Being to be itself--it is to be "me". The "whole" must be manifest in the "part".

Moreover this is how **free-will** is reconciled with the doctrine of the eternal perfection of the universe. The Mobius strip of duality presents a theological paradox--how can an omnipotent Deity permit free-will and how can free-will lead to sin in a perfect universe? But freedom is willing with the whole self and the self is whole only when it realizes it is Being being itself. This realization is the freedom of being the will of the Universe. Then, "I" move with the universe. This is the now-streaming Tao, or in Christian terms, being ever about our Father's business. Thus, "only when he voluntarily chooses that which he inexorably must do, is man free." This is the meaning of "obedience."

At this point it might be said that a statement like, "Reality is what is--and this is the One," is meaningless because it conveys no information. Quite so. The human mind desperately seeks the comfort of **meaning**. This is inevitable because it sees everything as "other" to itself. Its senses reveal a universe of separations, dualities, contradictions, divisions: hence the intellectual tools of analysis and synthesis. It's all quite inevitable in such a universe of experience. And so we seek meaning. Concepts arise allowing us to create theory. But all of this is symbolic, for every concept stands for something else, its referent. And the ultimate referent is the One.

If we come to the Pathless Land without the latitude and longitude of concept and symbol, where are we? What is reality? Saint Augustine found out and he reported: " My mind in the flesh of a trembling glance came to Absolute Being--That Which Is".

Zen Buddhism seems to specialize in the teaching that all theory and concept are "fingers pointing to the moon". Zen teaches that these fingers ultimately get in the way and obstruct the moon. It says that concepts--even the concept of identity--implicitly contain an explanation within themselves. The trick is to experience the "moon" yourself, not vicariously through the meaning of concepts.

The path to radiant spiritual experience can not be plotted by concepts. As *A Course in Miracles* puts it: "Salvation can be seen as nothing more than the escape from concepts." Isness is concept-free. The One is: it is not something that is, it is not a concept. This is not something the concept-ridden mind of man easily accepts.

Psychology reveals that the ego's greatest fear is its fear of extinction. But to "touch the hem of the garment", to pass through the door to end all doors, all trace of the fear, of the little "I's" wanting and willing--particularly its efforts to be spiritual--must be assuaged so that there is transparency to the fact that it is all done. As Heidegger puts it, "the field of vision is open but its openness is not due to my looking." We must therefore identify and face the clever convolution of the conceptualizing mind as it writhes and struggles in the face of dawning spiritual consciousness. Sometimes it seeks cover in the labyrinth of theology. Sometimes the purely intellectual stratagems of silent assumptions will obstruct and deceive. Sometimes visions and impulses from the unconscious will beset. Always, great strength and alertness are required. Always, the little "I" is demonstrating its mortal fear for its loss of existence.

How to unravel this existential paradox; how to worship in this Pathless Land; how to assuage the little "I's" fear of extinction; how to live and move and have my Being? These queries have to be resolved if we are to become unstuck.

The key is "acceptance" of That Which is. And here is another paradox. Acceptance is not something the little "I" is even capable of doing. This is another blow to the ego which loves to struggle heroically against impossible odds, making tremendous sacrifices. Spiritual austerities are great for the ego. The Katha Upanishad puts it with devastating bluntness: "The Self cannot be known through the study of Scriptures, nor through the intellect, nor through hearing many words about it. It can only be obtained by whom the Self chooses. Unto them it is that the Self reveals itself."

So, what do we mean by "acceptance" if there is nothing the little "I" can or cannot do? Again we face another seemingly insurmountable obstruction.

Conceptually, the nearest we can get to St. Augustine's *That Which Is*, is the understanding that the one Life lives me as the facts of Truth in the plan of Love. "Life" symbolizes the continuity of this isness. We use the word "Truth" to symbolize its substantiality and veridicality. "Love" symbolizes its fittingness Together, these concepts describe the necessary wholeness and fittingness of isness.

This is I AM. I AM is self-affirming, self-acting, self-actualizing. It must be so. Thus, there is no little "I" to accept or surrender. I AM is perfect, necessarily and simply so, because it is the One without a second being itself. "Acceptance" is our transparency to this simplicity: its necessariness retires our efforts to make it so. It is not something that can be "thought through"; the little "I" cannot force itself to understand that this is so. The little "I" can not try to be or do anything, even to be spiritual. I AM is a suspension of doing and knowing by the little "I" as it retires into the peace that it is already done. This is the contentment of being aware of *That Which Is*. In this contentment there is no desire to make it so because Life, Truth and Love eternally declare, "it is done".

As *A Course in Miracles* notes concerning the above point:

*When the light comes at last
into the mind given to contemplation;
or when the goal is finally achieved by anyone,
it always comes with just one happy realization:
"I need do nothing."*

My so-called "acceptance" of this light (my letting go, letting God) is no more than the self-proclamation of my spiritual identity--"there is no journey but only an awakening." And to be awake and aware of this timeless fact is my natural estate, for I AM is infinitely self-contained: being aware is what I AM "does". Unitive consciousness is the One being itself.

The One is, and I AM it.

Lastly, it matters not which sacred scriptural source we scrutinize. Fingers pointing to the One Moon can be found. For example, Jesus said: "I and my Father are one" and "Before Abraham was I AM." Although offered in a different format, Oneness is also described in Tibetan Buddhism's Six Vajra Verses.

*Although apparent phenomena
manifest as diversity
yet this diversity is non-dual,
and of all the multiplicity
of individual things that exist
none can be confined in a limited concept.*

*Staying free from the trap of any attempt
to say "it's like this" or "like that",*

*it becomes clear that all manifested forms are
aspects of the infinite formless,
and, indivisible from it,
are self-perfected.*

*Seeing that everything is self-perfected
from the very beginning,
the disease of striving for any achievement
is surrendered,
and just remaining in the natural state
as it is,
the presence of non-dual contemplation
continuously spontaneously arises.*

The ONE message is everywhere, if only we will awaken to and open our eyes and minds and come to see and accept it.

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