

The Beauty and Limitations of Mahamudra



Tibetan Buddhism can appear somewhat bizarre to someone who is encountering it for the first time, with its array of gods, demi-gods, goddesses and frightening-looking demons. Its popularity in the West is quite puzzling, except that, at least superficially, it appears a suitable replacement for Christianity. Like Catholicism, Tibetan Buddhism is a system rich in ritual, prayer and magical ceremonies, while its Lamas and Rinpoches resemble the church's hierarchy of bishops and priests. Anyone entering the Tibetan path is required to perform countless preparatory practices, composed chiefly of prostrations, rites and chanting. Only then can he or she commence a truly constructive meditative practice.

Tibetan Buddhism is called 'Vajrayana' or 'diamond vehicle.' It is considered to be a further development of Mahayana Buddhism, 'the third turning of the wheel of dharma.' It developed via the merging of two systems: local Tibetan shamanism ('Bon') and Indian Buddhism. It's an interesting combination, but it does seem very complicated. Indian Buddhism makes it complicated intellectually and Tibetan shamanism adds the convoluted magical and esoteric components.

While mainstream Tibetan Buddhism is more a religion than a spiritual path, there are a few of their schools which have developed a very high level of understanding on the subjects of meditation and enlightenment. These higher teachings are very sophisticated. They possess excellent and very well articulated conceptual tools. The two schools of Tibetan Buddhism which appear to be of the highest value are 'Mahamudra' and 'Dzogchen.' These two schools have many similarities but there are also

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some important differences in their teachings and energies. Dzogchen is more of a sudden path, while Mahamudra is a gradual one. Mahamudra is also more connected to the original energy of Buddhism, whereas Dzogchen already existed in Tibet before Buddhism's arrival there.

Mahamudra, which means 'great symbol,' is widely considered the most advanced path in Tibetan Buddhism, and is associated with great teachers such as Tilopa and Milarepa. Tilopa's deep instructions are expressed through the famous 'Song of Mahamudra':

Do naught with the body but relax;

Shut firm the mouth and silent remain;

Empty your mind and think of naught.

Like a hollow bamboo rest at ease your body.

Giving not nor taking, put your mind at rest.

Mahamudra is like a mind that clings to naught.

Thus practicing, in time you will reach Buddhahood.

The Void needs no reliance; Mahamudra rests on naught.

Without making an effort, but remaining natural,

One can break the yoke thus gaining liberation.

If one looks for naught when staring into space;

If with the mind one then observes the mind;

One destroys distinctions and reaches Buddhahood.

The clouds that wander through the sky have no roots, no home,

Nor do the distinctive thoughts floating through the mind.

Once the Self-mind is seen, Discrimination stops.

Mahamudra has the practices of 'samatha' (concentration) and 'vipassana' (insight) as its base, but its real essence is the radical recognition of the nature of the mind. In this way, it goes beyond more traditional vipassana, in which there is no clear link between insight into impermanence, suffering and no-self and actual self-realization. This is because the instructions given are different. In traditional vipassana, one aims at obtaining insight into the non-existence of self within our relative consciousness



(the five skandhas: form, feeling, perception, mental formations and discernment), while in Mahamudra, insight has a direct positive objective: the recognition of the ground of non-arising fundamental consciousness.

The lower stages of meditation in Mahamudra are described as follows: samatha, meditation with support, meditation without support and vipassana. The higher stages are then based on the 'Four Yogas of Mahamudra:' one-pointedness, simplicity, one-taste and non-meditation.

Focusing first of all on the lower stages, we can see that, unlike Theravada Buddhism, vipassana in Mahamudra does not begin immediately after samatha – there are intermediary stages. This more detailed method, in some ways, resembles passing through the 'eight jhanas', although the approach itself is very different.

The first question is: What is the difference between samatha and meditation with support? Samatha does use an object, but it is not meditation – it is concentration alone. In both cases, the observer focuses on an object in order to gain a stable point of reference. In samatha, the observer tries to glue itself to an object in a very coarse, primitive way, whereas in meditation with support, it maintains the continuity of focus on an object from a distance in order to open the space of meditation and establish a stable contrast to its own presence. Buddhism does not have the concept of pure subjectivity, so there is no clear explanation as to the meaning behind these practices. Nevertheless, they clearly intuitively recognize the need to evolve toward and develop our own subjectivity.

The next step in Mahamudra is meditation without support. The question here is: how can one practice meditation without support before having access to an awakened state? Well, relatively speaking, one can, but the practice will be very limited. We can draw a parallel with the lower forms of shikantaza, which point to abiding in attention, but without yet signifying any true access to 'just being.' To enter meditation without support, we must fully realize our pure nature; true meditation without support is the state of non-abidance and samadhi in the heart of the universal I am. What is described on the path of Mahamudra resembles more of an initial attempt to abide in a condition independent of the pursuit of objects; in this case, attention resting in itself. As such, a more accurate name for this stage would be 'attention without support.' This attention is not yet awareness, for it lacks both spaciousness and depth.



In Mahamudra, awareness is awakened only after going through the process of contemplation or vipassana.

As previously noted, the application of vipassana in Mahamudra is more positive than in traditional Theravada Buddhism. It is not used merely to affirm the three marks of existence (suffering, impermanence and no self), but to gain direct insight into our pure nature. Its purpose is actually twofold: firstly, to develop familiarity with the nature of relative consciousness (that is, thoughts and perceptions), and secondly, to create a deeper relationship with the subjective essence of the mind through contemplating the essence of 'being aware' as it manifests in consciousness. As a result of these insights, the base of awareness can open up, allowing one to move into the higher state of meditation without support: in other words, from attention without support to actual awareness without support. In our terminology, this represents moving from having developed a solidified sense of self as the observer without object, to abidance in conscious me.

We will now look more deeply into the meditative contemplations of Mahamudra for a better understanding of the nature of vipassana in this tradition. As we will see, it is quite different to the traditional methods found in Theravada. The main difference is that the contemplative process aims at discovering the actual essence of the mind; it is not oriented toward getting fixated on impermanence, suffering and the absence of self. Still, it remains limited by the Buddhist concept of reality. In Buddhism, one cannot really say there is 'something' beyond the mind, or that the nature of consciousness has an actual essence or existence, as this would conflict with its philosophy of no-self. One cannot say that no-self *exists*, as the concept of no-self is a negation of self, rather than an affirmation of no-self. As self does not have an inherent existence, neither does no-self. However, in Mahamudra, as well as in Dzogchen and Zen, we can find affirmative descriptions of the ground of the mind. For instance, in Dzogchen they speak of 'self-luminous awareness' as the base. From the viewpoint of 'pure Buddhism' this might be considered a heretical concept, as it seems more to resemble the concept of Brahman in Hinduism than no-self in Buddhism. Perhaps the differences are just semantics, but because Buddhism is exceedingly attached to its semantics and intellectual perfectionism, we might infer some sense of a positive existence did seep through into its energy and philosophy.

Nevertheless, let's proceed to the meditative contemplations of the Mahamudra tradition. This is the so-called 'Root text for *Gelug-Kagyü Mahamudra*':



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Absorb for a while unwaveringly in that state which is without the gurgle-gurgle of appearance-making and appearances, of “this” and “not that.” Do not contrive anything with thoughts such as expectations or worries. This does not mean, however, that you cease all attention as if you had fainted or fallen asleep. Rather, you must tie your attention to the post of mindfulness in order not to wander, and station alertness to be aware of any mental movement.

Firmly tighten the hold of your mindfulness on that which has the essential nature of clarity and awareness, and behold it starkly. Whatever thoughts might arise, recognize them as being that and that. Alternatively, like a dueler, cut the thoughts off completely, wham-wham, as soon as they occur. Once you have completely cut these off and have settled your mind, then, without losing mindfulness, relax and loosen up. As has been said, “Relax and loosen its firm tightness and there is the set state of mind.” And elsewhere, “When mind itself, ensnared in a tangle, loosens up, there is no doubt that it frees itself.” Like these statements, loosen up, but without any wandering.

When you look at the nature of any thought that arises, it disappears by itself and an utter bareness dawns. Likewise, when you inspect when settled, you see a vivid, non-obstructive bareness and clarity. This is well known as “the settled and moving (minds) mixed together.”

Thus, no matter what thought arises, when, without blocking it, you recognize that it is a movement of mind and have settled on its essential nature, you find it is like the example of the flight of a bird confined on a boat. As is said, “Just as a crow having flown from a ship after circling the directions must re-alight on it (...)

When you realize simultaneously that appearances do not obscure voidness and voidness does not make appearances cease, you are manifesting, at that time, the excellent pathway mind that cognizes from the single viewpoint of voidness and dependent arising being synonymous.

In the vipassana of Mahamudra there are five stages of ‘looking at’ the nature of the mind: looking at the settled mind, looking at the moving mind, looking at the mind reflecting appearances, looking at the mind in relation to the body, looking at the settled and moving mind together.

What is meant by the phrase ‘looking at’? The first function of looking is simply getting acquainted with the environment of our own mind. There is no judgment in looking; there is no intention to label things as impermanent or as suffering. There is just a sense of wanting to know and directly see our



phenomenal consciousness, to really become familiar with the mind in which we live our whole life, but take completely for granted. The second function of looking is to seek freedom from being ensnared by that mind, from being captive to our own thinking processes. Here, we contemplate the different ways our mind controls us and, by becoming more conscious, look for a means to break free from this bondage. In Dzogchen, they call it 'self-liberation of thought.' The final function of looking is to get in touch with the very place from which this looking is arising; to meet the base of our perception. This final stage of this understanding is true vipassana: insight into the nature of awareness.

It is interesting to see that neither samatha, nor meditation – either with support or without support – can awaken the base of awareness. These three levels of meditation all relate to the process of the observer growing into himself. At the third stage, meditation without support, the observer attempts something very foreign to its own nature – just to be. While this is a noble effort, the observer is unable to go beyond attention and, as such, will always remain confined to its own presence. What is the difference between the observer and attention? We often refer to the observer simply as 'external attention', but when we inquire into the matter more deeply we see the observer is actually a unity of attention and me. Therefore, for the observer to go beyond attention, it needs to realize its own deeper identity, which is conscious me. Because there is no concept of conscious me in Mahamudra, they have had to 'go behind the observer's back' so to speak, in order to open the space of awareness, but without knowing that the essence of that space is conscious me. The awakening of conscious me is therefore achieved only indirectly through vipassana contemplation, which as it navigates through different modes of consciousness, finally stirs something in the constricted identity of the observer that inspires it to break free from the prison of attention and open the space of abidance. This is called 'the first awakening.'

The 'Four Yogas of Mahamudra' represent the stages of development which are meant to follow the first awakening. These four stages are: one-pointedness, simplicity, one-taste and non-meditation. They beautifully represent the post-awakening process of integration between the nature of the mind and the world of appearances. The four yogas are as follows:



1. One-pointedness

After the essence of the mind has been awakened, one arrives at the condition of being anchored, or absorbed, in awareness (or in consciousness, if it is awakened). This is called one-pointedness. Even though this term commonly implies concentration of attention, or mindfulness, it is here applied with a deeper meaning. It is not the most skillful use of terminology, because 'one-pointedness' does not reflect the quality of spaciousness inherent to the experience.

2. Simplicity (also called non-discrimination)

This stage represents a higher refinement of our relationship between the world of appearances and the mind. Here, one goes beyond the habit of looking at things or observing them, and allows everything to arise and disappear with no interference in their natural flow. This can be seen as the first level of suchness: everything is as it is.

3. One-taste

At the stage of one-taste, the distinction between consciousness and the world of perception disappears, and the inner and the outer become one – one single taste of consciousness as it is. Here, we can identify a second level of suchness, where not only the world is perceived as 'thus', but our fundamental consciousness is also experienced as 'thus' – these two are unified in one-taste as complete suchness.

4. Non-meditation

The final stage of the four yogas designates the stabilization of the ground of consciousness and its complete integration with the external world. No further practice is necessary, no effort need be applied. In non-meditation, one realizes the natural state, transcending the dichotomy of meditation and non-meditation, reality and illusion, samsara and nirvana.

Here we have described a simplified model of spiritual unfoldment according to the path of Mahamudra. While it is both rich and profound, we can also see that this model is partial and incomplete. It almost goes without saying that Mahamudra lacks the understanding of the nature of me and of the soul. In these aspects it remains true to its Buddhist roots, but not true to the truth of reality. Mahamudra also lacks the very important distinction between awareness and consciousness. Awareness



is shallower than consciousness; it is not unified with universal consciousness. Even though the level of detail in Mahamudra is very high, its descriptions are not precise enough to indicate which state the adept has realized: awareness, pure consciousness or both. Our analysis assumes their contemplative processes, beginning with gaining insight into the nature of the mind, culminate in the realization of awareness, rather than that of consciousness. This is because one cannot awaken consciousness through any technique or practice. However, this does not necessarily mean adepts of Mahamudra do not awaken to pure consciousness: it may be transmitted to them by a master, and the instructions given could then be interpreted in reference to the awakened state of pure consciousness rather than to that of awareness.

The question is: if one only realizes the nature of the mind on the level of awareness, can one then go through the four yogas process? The answer is yes and no. From the lower base of awareness, the realization of these yogas would be much more limited, and consequently, tainted and imperfect. And, in the later stages, particularly in respect to truly realizing the yoga of one-taste, the higher base of pure consciousness must be awakened. Our consciousness has to be in the state of absence, samadhi, in universal consciousness in order to embrace the inner and outer as one-taste, one existence. In truth, to experience one-taste from awareness would be no more than a pale imitation of real unity.

As regards the contemplations of the mind itself in Mahamudra, we can certainly appreciate the important distinction it makes between the moving and settled mind (as expressed in the 'root texts' above). However, in addition to being rather flat and one-dimensional, there are some important elements missing in its understanding of the relationship between consciousness and the mind. Who is really observing the mind? It is often said in Buddhism that the mind is observing itself. But explaining it in this way evades the problem rather than solves it. It is very strange that the question of 'who' is so poorly understood in spirituality. Unless we properly experience the one who is observing, how can we truly understand the mind and be able to go beyond it?

The first thing to understand is that one cannot 'look at' the mind unless the observer is solidified. What this means is that, in order to observe the mind (rather than just become momentarily aware of it), we must have a continuity of identity within the thought process. If we lack this identity, or if it keeps fading away, we find ourselves constantly losing our ground and drifting back into the mind. To maintain our awareness of thinking, we must simultaneously be aware of our own subjectivity as the



base of thought as well as of the thought process itself. When a meditator who has not established his observer looks at the mind, he identifies the thinking processes as separate from him, but then immediately loses his base and falls back into the net of thinking. This process then repeats itself over and over again in a vicious circle.

The pitfall of a weak observer in Mahamudra is the reason why vipassana only begins after one has gone through the processes of samatha, meditation with support and meditation without support. The purpose of meditation without support at this point is to train attention to come closer to the condition of pure subjectivity, so it can begin to free itself from its addiction to the pursuit of objects. Traditionally, vipassana starts immediately after samatha, when the presence of the observer is still very undeveloped. It is no surprise, then, that it is so unproductive. We shouldn't forget that Buddha himself began his vipassana contemplation only after having matured through all eight jhanas.

What actually happens when we observe the mind? We sit in meditation, close our eyes, become alert and aware and direct our attention toward arising thoughts, seeing them come and go. This is 'looking at the moving mind'. Then, as we look at the moving mind from a deeper place of attention, we notice that, although the observed thought disappears, consciousness (which is independent of that thought) still remains. To cognize this permanent base beyond the mind is the correct translation of 'becoming aware of the settled mind'.

There are then two scenarios in which the moving and settled minds can be 'mixed together.' The first scenario is when thoughts are arising naturally, and we are recognizing the base of non-thinking at the same time. The second is when we are recognizing the base of non-thinking in the absence of arising thoughts; here it is not the absence of thoughts that represents the settled mind, but our essence, which is independent of both presence and absence of thoughts. Where is the moving mind in the second scenario? It is what is recognizing the settled mind. This movement of recognition is the deeper dimension of the moving mind. Rather than being the moving mind of the thinking process, in this second scenario, it is the movement of a pure and subtle form of cognition. Since there is no consciousness without cognition (as that would be a contradiction in terms), there is no consciousness without movement. The purer our consciousness is, the purer and more transparent this movement is.



What is the true nature of ‘the settled mind?’ It is our pure subjectivity, which itself can be experienced on several different levels depending on how deeply our consciousness is awakened. However, in Mahamudra, the term ‘settled mind’ does not really point to the recognition of our pure nature. Rather, it points to the absence of thought and the ‘bareness’ that remains. This is the lower level of the settled mind, which is apprehended when we are trying to identify non-thinking through the cessation of thought, or contemplating the gaps between thoughts. The root text says:

When you look at the nature of any thought that arises, it disappears by itself and an utter bareness dawns. Likewise, when you inspect when settled, you see a vivid, nonobstructive bareness and clarity. This is well known as “the settled and moving (minds) mixed together.”

So, in their view, through recognition of the ‘utter bareness’ that dawns in the absence of thought, the qualities of vividness and clarity are manifested. The vividness they refer to does not belong to the experience of the absence of thought, however, but to the base of consciousness from which we have recognized this temporary absence. Even though it might seem that we are perceiving the absence of thought, in reality we are just becoming more deeply conscious of the fundamental space *prior to* both the presence and absence of thoughts. Only from here can the true vividness of the void manifest. To conclude, because there is no clear concept of turning attention back to its source in Mahamudra, its process of awakening to no-mind is round-about and indirect. Mahamudra teaching does not point us to a direct and dynamic relationship with our pure nature; it just skillfully tries to create an internal environment in which no-mind can ‘dawn upon us.’

How do we ‘look at’ the settled mind? In a separate article we discussed the four formless jhanas, which describe the process through which we grow into a more and more refined relationship with the space beyond the mind. Initially, when we look at the absence of thoughts, we identify it as an external space. This is because of our deeply ingrained habit of objectifying our experience; the absence of thought is perceived as a ‘place’ located ‘in front of’ the observer. This place is not the real settled mind, but a false one.

In truth, we cannot really ‘look at’ the settled mind, because to realize it we must go beyond the observer. The observer is the link between the mind and conscious me (awareness), and it can only become properly conscious of the settled mind when it surrenders into conscious me. That which allows us to enter the settled mind is not the observer, it is pure attention. Pure attention flows into our pure



subjectivity; it moves in the opposite direction to that of the observer (which directs our external attention toward the mind and the world). So the observer cannot look at the settled mind at all; and if it does, what it is looking at is not the true settled mind anymore. Direct recognition of the settled mind comes from pure attention, which is the heart of conscious me. The observer's correct function is to activate the external intelligence of consciousness as it relates to phenomenal existence. In this way, it can contemplate the nature of the settled mind through thought and thereby contribute an additional layer of understanding.

We must understand that, on the lower level, the 'settled mind' merely represents a quiet mind, or a temporary absence of thought. When used in this way, it is a very relative term, because the mind can never entirely be suppressed – even when it is not thinking in a gross way, it is still objectifying our consciousness on many subtle levels. A true state beyond thinking exists unconditionally, and it is beyond the presence or absence of thoughts and beyond looking or not looking at the mind.

On the higher level, the settled mind represents a condition in which our attention has surrendered to its pure subjectivity. Here, the meaning of the moving and settled minds 'mixed together' points to the unity of our pure subjectivity with the movement of attention, cognition and arising thoughts. Even in the absence of gross thinking, pure attention can still be naturally active and can recognize our fundamental consciousness – on this higher level the settled mind exists to a degree independently of our relative moving mind and consciousness.

So, on a very basic level, we can experience the movement of thoughts (moving mind) from the point of the objectless attention of the observer (the 'relative' settled mind). But, on a higher level, we can experience thinking from the place of being absorbed, not only in the observer, but also in conscious me (higher settled mind). And, on the highest level, we can experience thinking from the unity of pure consciousness and conscious me. Ultimately, to experience the highest level of unity between thinking and non-thinking, we must realize what we call 'complete consciousness.' In complete consciousness, there actually is no such thing as 'looking at the mind.' There is only total consciousness, in which thoughts are experienced as the creative transparency of intelligence, which is fully embraced and infused into the light of our fundamental nature. In this state, the 'settled mind' refers to the unity of pure consciousness and conscious me, and the 'moving mind' to the flow of cognition from both pure and transparent intelligence. Here, the meaning of the moving and settled mind mixed together is that



the cognition inherent to both thinking (intelligence) and non-thinking (pure consciousness and conscious me unified) is also simultaneously self-cognizant.

Observing the mind is just one dimension of our relationship with thinking. There are many others. Mahamudra does speak about different levels of relating to the mind, such as 'looking at thinking,' 'letting the mind manifest in a natural way,' 'not discriminating between thinking and not-thinking' and 'realizing the unity of our pure nature with the mind.' However, it does not properly explain the mechanics of how to master the skill of thinking from non-thinking. In part, this is because its perception of the mind is too simplistic. It primarily sees the mind as the arising and disappearing of thoughts, despite this being just one aspect of thinking. Thinking is more than that. It is a creative process which requires our mastering the faculty of intentional thinking. In this, we are not merely allowing the mind to operate, but actively engaged in the creativity of our intelligence: we choose to think our thoughts. Not only is thinking arising from our pure nature – our thoughts themselves are in a relationship of recognition and understanding with our fundamental consciousness. In order to manifest this correct condition, we must learn how to think from the place of having embodied conscious me, as well as how to function on the level of the observer from the unified base of conscious me and pure consciousness.

At the end of the text there is a passage about the unity of the nature of the mind and thinking:

When you realize simultaneously that appearances do not obscure voidness and voidness does not make appearances cease, you are manifesting, at that time, the excellent pathway mind that cognizes from the single viewpoint of voidness and dependent arising being synonymous.

In this last stage of contemplation on the nature of the mind, one goes beyond looking at anything; attention and recognition become directionless. Here, one is simply conscious that non-thinking and thinking coexist; that thinking has no effect upon non-thinking, and non-thinking does cause thinking to cease. The 'voidness' of our true nature and 'dependent arising' of mental formations (anything that is identified in the field of perception and cognition) are seen as mutually inclusive and become unified. Although this is a great achievement, one should not stop at this level of understanding. Deeper inquiry leads us to discover profound dualities still remain in the relationships between our consciousness and both its intelligence and the universal I am.



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Who exists so mysteriously and intangibly in between thinking and voidness? That is the real question. Who bridges the inner with the outer, the participation in creation with the surrender to the absolute reality? This aspect of our existence has not been illuminated through the technology of evolution in Buddhism – conscious me. Conscious me is what makes our consciousness alive, dynamic and intelligent. It is from conscious me that the qualities of clarity and luminosity radiate into our pure nature. Conscious me can be non-active, abiding and infused into the emptiness and translucency of our complete consciousness. Alternatively, based on its conscious intention, it may relate actively to both the mind and world of perception through the transparent observer, while simultaneously, through pure attention and pure me, being in a conscious relationship of absorption in universal subjectivity.

To summarize: Mahamudra is aware of the non-exclusive co-existence of thinking and non-thinking, but it does not see the intricate mechanisms within their relationship deeply enough. Its main flaw is that it has not penetrated ‘who’ is aware of thinking (the observer), ‘who’ is aware of non-thinking (pure attention) and ‘who’ is the very heart of attention and the bridge between our relative and absolute consciousness (conscious me). Having no concept of who is aware of the mind inevitably culminates in a very poor relationship with it. This prevents the proper realization of the mind as the intelligence of the soul (which happens through the merging of the observer and the mind with pure consciousness). Having no understanding of who is aware of non-thinking (or denying that anyone can be aware of it) obscures the fact that we actually do have a real relationship with our pure nature. According to Mahamudra, our connection to our pure nature is merely passive; we naturally ‘fall’ into the basic void through the ‘self-liberation’ of thought. But it is not so: there are many degrees to which we can embody our pure nature and surrender to it, thereby entering deeper and deeper levels of samadhi.

Unless these matters are fully understood, we can never grasp the most essential intricacies of our relationship with both our soul and the universal reality. It is this understanding that ultimately determines the very depth of our self-realization. In this respect, Mahamudra shares the main flaw of all the non-dual traditions: they perceive our pure nature in a static manner and fail to embrace the dynamic relationship between our individual and the universal consciousness.

Mahamudra is a path of consciousness. As such, its final limitation is that it does not point in any way to our deeper evolution beyond consciousness toward the realization of the heart and the absolute. Buddhism in general is not geared towards the awakening of the heart. Usually it compensates for this



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through developing the qualities of loving kindness and compassion. But to truly awaken the heart one has to surrender to the feeling dimension of the soul and embrace one's human pain. This obviously cannot happen on a path that is fixated upon the elimination of suffering and consequently represses the essential sensitivity of our human nature

Mahamudra does not point to the awakening of being and the absolute state either. It understands the so-called 'nature of the mind' as the primordial ground, but consciousness is not the primordial ground. Consciousness is the ground of creation, but it is the absolute that is the primordial ground of consciousness. For our consciousness to reach perfection, it must be merged with the unmanifested through vertical samadhi in the source. Then – and only then – can consciousness truly represent the primordial ground of existence.

Mahamudra is a profound path. It presents one of the most evolved models of evolution into consciousness available. However, in order to become a path to wholeness, it must embrace our multidimensional evolution in a more complete way: the nature of consciousness has to be understood more deeply, the subtle dimension of me needs to be illuminated, the distinction between awareness and consciousness has to be made, the distinction between outer and inner attention needs to be drawn, the element of the vertical evolution and surrender of consciousness has to be incorporated, and the evolution into the heart has to be included. Above all, the awakening of the soul has to be embraced in Mahamudra's conceptual vision. Only then could it truly be called a 'great symbol' – the symbol of spiritual wholeness.

Blessings,

Anadi

For a full glossary of terminology please visit our website www.anaditeaching.com/glossary

