



The Hidden Dimensions of Consciousness

Based on the simple understanding that unless we reach freedom from being unconscious, we cannot evolve in any real way, the awakening of consciousness is the first logical step on the path to our complete self. Anyone can use the term 'consciousness', but to truly grasp its meaning is very difficult. Words like consciousness, being and absolute are the basic building blocks of spiritual language. But unless they reflect in our mind the correct understanding of what they are meant to signify, they cannot become suitable tools for our evolution. On the contrary, they will become a prison for our mind.

We all use consciousness, but unless we are awakened to it, we are not that consciousness: we are merely a pale reverberation of it. Our mind is an expression of consciousness, and so is our sense of me. Consciousness runs through our whole body, allowing us to feel our existence, but that consciousness is not conscious of itself. It is fully identified with the objective reality, disconnected from its own self. To awaken consciousness is like turning on the light in a dark room: one can get used to darkness and even gain some sense of orientation in it, but turning on the light results in a radical change. The whole space becomes illuminated.

How can consciousness be awakened? There are two main misconceptions here: firstly, that it can be awakened through practice, and, secondly, that it is already there and we just need to recognize it. Assuming the second view were correct, an interesting question to ask would be: Who needs to recognize it? If consciousness is already there, why is it unable to recognize itself? Consciousness is not 'there' unless it is activated through awakening. Awakening should not be confused with realizing what is independent from the one who awakens, in the same way that when you open your eyes in the morning, you become conscious of the world around you. Awakening manifests a new condition of existence. It is not about awakening *to* something or someone. It is the awakening *of* someone.

Awakening of consciousness cannot manifest through practice because practice cannot take us beyond the boundaries of me, our personal sense of identity. At the most, practice can result in arriving at the state of awareness, which is the thoughtless state of me. Consciousness is a condition beyond me; it belongs to the soul. No practice can bring our soul into being, nor can this awakening happen through self-enquiry. The enquiring ego cannot take us beyond itself. It can keep enquiring, contemplating the impermanent nature of the mind or convincing itself to be beyond thinking, but it cannot get out of that very mind. Even turning attention back to itself, as important as it is, cannot take us beyond me, for attention is *of* that me.

Because the universal and individual dimensions of consciousness are mixed up in the major traditions of enlightenment, not much attention has been paid to the fact that consciousness is realized in our body. If we assume that consciousness is all-pervading, seeking it in reference to our body would be a contradiction. When Ramana Maharishi was asked where the self is realized, he pointed to his heart but then said that the self is not in the body, that it is everywhere. Without acknowledging the existence of his soul, he could get around this paradox. Initially, what we are realizing through awakening of consciousness is not universal consciousness, but rather the individual consciousness of the soul. That consciousness is in a direct relationship with universal consciousness, but it is not universal. It has a different function and role to play in creation.

Consciousness is awakened in the headspace. Knowing this makes a huge difference because now at least we know approximately where to look for it. There are Hindu teachings that speak about chakras, such as the third eye, being located in the head. However, their descriptions of the third eye – which relate to psychic perception, inner vision or intuition – do not in any way relate to the awakening of consciousness. Certainly, no amount of concentration on the third eye can bring us closer to it.

Before we go deeper into the location of consciousness, we must realize how poor our relationship with our own head is. It is often presumed that 'being in the head' is a bad thing because it is synonymous with living in the mind. However, there are more things in the head than the mind. We must remember that the human brain, the further development of the nervous system, has become the most complex and sophisticated organ in the natural world. It is in the brain that the most important glands are located, controlling all our bodily functions and even our emotional responses. It is in our head that we reach the most profound insights into the nature of reality. This is where philosophy and science are born, poetry, imagination, creativity and intuition, spiritual teachings – and consciousness. Of course, our head has to be linked with other centers to function properly, but it undoubtedly rules our existence. To underestimate our own head would be highly unintelligent.

Before our consciousness can be properly awakened, its impersonal essence – I am – must be activated. It is usually activated by the grace of a spiritual guide but can happen in more mature souls as a result of their previous evolution, meaning they remember what they have already awakened in their previous lives. I am is realized at the depth of the headspace, in-between the very back of the head and behind it. It is interesting to note that the place in our body that we are least in touch with is actually the back of the head. When new students are asked to become conscious of it, they are usually confused at first; they don't know how to relate to it. No one is aware of this space; it is as if it were closed to us. It is a deep block, but perhaps it is time for humanity to enter it. What is very little known is that the back of the head is the actual doorway to universal consciousness. This is the place where I am awakens, at the point of entry into universal consciousness.



The awakening of I am (which is not yet consciousness) opens the way for evolution of me into the soul. One of the roles of me is to remember I am and, through that remembrance, to enable its stabilization. While I am is the door for me to transcend itself through its eventual surrender, I am is also dependent on me. Without the surrender of me into I am, I am cannot reach its final depth. The goal of me merging with I am is to awaken our higher self, our soul. I am actually becomes consciousness by being illuminated by me. The dimension of me that can merge with consciousness is what we call pure me, which is the innermost and most intimate aspect of our personal self. Without pure me, consciousness cannot be conscious of itself. The unity of pure me and I am is what we call pure consciousness, for only then it becomes truly pure, immaculate.

In addition to me surrendering into I am, in order to embody it and realize the soul, there is a process of the soul surrendering into universal consciousness. When we speak about the soul surrendering, we speak about the pure me of consciousness that is unified with I am and yet continues to surrender through being pulled by the gravity of the beyond. As long as our consciousness is limited to the confines of the head, our soul is still not in horizontal samadhi in universal consciousness. To enter horizontal samadhi, the presence of the soul has to merge with absence, which is the transcendent presence of the supreme self. This is realized behind the headspace.

Although sitting meditation with eyes closed is important, the main practice with consciousness is done with open eyes. This is because it is only with open eyes that we can reach horizontal samadhi. Additionally, the challenge of maintaining consciousness while engaged in activities strengthens the energy of consciousness and deepens the relationship of me with I am. Me is learning the great skill of living simultaneously in two dimensions, inner and outer, like a window looking out in two directions. Me must constantly feel I am and keep surrendering to it while being able to function efficiently in the outer reality. It must be able to embrace both the internal and external polarities of our existence.

The stabilization of consciousness is one of the milestones in our evolution into our true self. There are three levels of that stabilization: energetic stabilization, stabilization of recognition and stabilization of surrender. Energetic stabilization renders the energetic dimension of I am constant: it becomes the constant background beyond the mind. While it is an important step, we need to recognize the limitations of this condition and not get stuck in it. In the energetic state of consciousness alone, me remains disconnected from I am. As a result, it has no force with which to transform the mind. In addition, that energetic dimension itself will remain shallow, and the state will, in time, deteriorate and dissipate due to the fact that me has not yet established the proper relationship with it. Hence, the concept of energetic stabilization is only relevant as a base for our further evolution. It is not something existentially stable in and of itself.



Stabilization of recognition refers to the important level of integration between me and I am. Through the process of cultivating I am, me is learning how to eliminate all the gaps in recognition. However, it is usually after the state has been energetically stabilized that stabilization of recognition can be fully activated. What this stabilization means is that we are at all times conscious of I am, no matter how much we are involved in external interactions. Adepts experience all kinds of challenges with maintaining the continuity of recognition. For instance, it is quite common to lose recognition of I am while being engaged in conversations which demand more concentrated effort and tend to activate emotional identification. While at the beginning, discipline and vigilance are required to develop this continuity, the more our me is integrated with I am, the more the constant recognition becomes natural and effortless until it is an indivisible part of who we are. In our nature, we are pure self-cognition.

The next level of integration between me and I am is the stabilization of surrender. Here, me is not only continuously conscious of I am as its higher self, that recognition is immediately linked to its surrender into I am. It is not that me first of all recognizes and only then surrenders, but rather that recognition and surrender become one and the same. The bond of surrender from me to I am not only serves the purpose of reaching a deeper realization, it is their natural relationship. Even after me has merged with I am, there is still a subtle duality which allows that surrender to continue endlessly. Within the soul, her one being, there are two dimensions of pure subjectivity living in a relationship of love, intimacy and surrender. When raindrops fall on the earth, they are not choosing to; it happens due to gravity. In a similar way, there is a magnetic force between me and I am constituting the natural pull to surrender. Me is the active principle of surrender: it surrenders into I am because I am is simply more deeply rooted in existence.

Initially, our me has to make a conscious decision to let go into I am, but at a certain point of integration, it is just happening. This natural surrender can only manifest when the separation between me and I am has been dissolved. Initially, me surrenders into I am for them to unite into one self. After they have reached unity, me continues to surrender from the place of that unity as the soul into universal consciousness, gradually entering the natural state of horizontal samadhi.

The realization of consciousness through our human body has a unique flavor and direction of energy. Our body is both our identity and a portal to universal existence; it is our temple of revelations. Although to properly awaken consciousness one must establish it mostly with open eyes, sitting in meditation helps its energetic integration and opens us to a different type of relationship with consciousness. Closing our eyes has a profound impact on how our consciousness behaves. When we close our eyes, the experience of consciousness becomes more vertical than horizontal. When we open them, consciousness relates to itself within the contrast of creation, the world of perception. With closed eyes, this contrast is suspended and replaced with the experience of consciousness that is more in relationship with itself and with the source.



Consciousness is felt not only at the back of the headspace but in the whole headspace, and it begins to gravitate towards the source.

One of the reasons why consciousness is experienced more holistically with closed eyes is that there is less distinction between me and I am. Here, we are speaking about the whole of me: pure me, conscious me, the observer and subconscious me. They all are experienced as one organism contained in the space of pure consciousness. Although this is a desirable condition, it can also be confusing for those who have not properly embodied their I am because they cannot separate their pure nature from these relative states of me. This is another reason why the awakening of consciousness has to be properly achieved with open eyes first, while being assisted through sitting in meditation. The horizontal surrender of me into I am allows the complete separation of our true self from the mind-construct of the ego-self. Only when this separation is fully achieved can one begin the process of integration between pure consciousness and the mental dimension of our human self.

This integration is necessary to arrive at the condition of complete consciousness. Complete consciousness is beyond pure consciousness because it includes all the aspects of our holistic consciousness and the mind. In order to reach complete consciousness, conscious me has to be fully awakened and the construct of the mind has to be surrendered and integrated with our pure nature. In complete consciousness, pure consciousness (which is the unity of pure me and I am), conscious me, the observer, subconscious me, and the process of thinking become one unified and integrated self.

The further evolution of pure consciousness, after it has been stabilized, refers primarily to its surrender into the absolute. For this to happen, the absolute state has to be awakened. However, even without the absolute, consciousness is meant to gradually descend vertically towards being, settling down at the bottom of our existence. The first level of the vertical evolution of consciousness is arriving at the condition of abidance. Here, consciousness is not yet surrendered in any way but is already experiencing a level of being, a connection to the now. This is still experienced in the headspace. The condition of abidance is the proper platform from which true surrender can begin. Consciousness is then letting go.

The first level of proper surrender is arriving at the condition of consciousness at rest. Consciousness is no longer merely abiding in itself – it is resting. In order to rest, it must be connected to something deeper than itself. The more it rests, the more it enters what is beneath it and the closer it comes to the source. The experience of rest on the level of consciousness is felt at the bottom of the headspace as the energy of consciousness settles down, reaching the limits of its capacity for letting go. The further evolution into surrender involves reaching deeper levels of samadhi and entering the dimension of absence. We must keep in mind that consciousness in surrender is still experienced in the headspace, for this is where it lives. Some seekers think that they need to drop their consciousness down into being when they surrender. What they call surrender is



actually losing consciousness by trying to identify it with being. Consciousness experiences its surrender in the area of the lower portion of the head, towards the neck.

However, when it is in surrender, there are no longer boundaries between consciousness and the source; the space is fully open. In Zen, they use the metaphor 'the bottom of the bucket falls off' for reaching the absolute, which is when the bottom of being 'falls off'. When consciousness reaches the state of absence and enters the absolute, we can say, 'the bottom of the head falls off'. Our consciousness, the child of the dimension of presence, returns to the state of unity with the inner void of the absolute absence, the living depth of the supreme being. This is not the end but the true beginning of our journey into the inner realm. The extent to which we have matured up until this point will determine our readiness for the next universal step in our never-ending evolution into the infinite depth of the beloved.

For our consciousness to awaken properly, our soul needs to awaken as well. Consciousness in itself is the pure light of cognition, the source of intelligence and understanding. But when it is linked to the soul, its quality is totally transformed. We begin to experience it as our most intimate existence, as a space of bliss and love. Consciousness in its pure form is love, in the same way as a truly awakened heart is consciousness. However, in many cases, when the soul remains dormant, it is necessary to complete evolution of consciousness through connecting it to the heart. Most people find it easier to meet their soul in the heart due to its natural innocence and the absence of corruption coming from the mind. In any case, in its process of surrender into the absolute, consciousness has to go through the heart first. The heart is the bridge between consciousness and the absolute. Those whose heart is unawakened cannot surrender their consciousness; they have no bridge. When consciousness drops into the heart, we reach the state of samadhi in the heart, and from that place our surrender continues into the source. That which enters the source is the unity of consciousness and heart – our soul.

We need to bear in mind that for an average seeker – and we mean among those few who are actually capable of awakening – the work with consciousness does not stop upon reaching the threefold stabilization. It is in fact the work of a lifetime. Because in our teaching awakening to consciousness is regarded as the first step on the path, there is a tendency to undervalue this realization. Some students rush to complete the work with consciousness so that they can move on to the more 'advanced' practices. This is a misunderstanding. The fact that something comes first does not make it inferior. Awakening of consciousness is a very advanced stage in human evolution. It is so advanced that hardly anyone on earth knows what consciousness is other than through using the word in an empty way. How many humans are truly in consciousness? This awakening is a complete breakthrough in our evolution as a species. On some level, it is even more revolutionary than reaching the absolute state, for it fundamentally transforms who we are.



Time is needed for maturation of consciousness. It is not just about the state in itself but, above all, its relationship with our mind and all the remaining layers of me. Even if pure me has surrendered to I am, the dimension of me which is still tied to the mind and personality needs a long time to fully integrate. Arriving at consciousness is just the first step in beginning to learn how to live from it and how to express our humanity fully in the world while not diminishing in any way our relationship of devotion, love and unity with our pure nature.

Blessings,

Anadi

For a glossary of the terminology used in this teaching and for further resources, you may visit our website www.anaditeaching.com

