

**as long as any seer remain the seen remains
subject and object, take their form
only in relation to one another
that correlation is caused by ignorance
when ignorance dissolves,
that correlation dissolves
into the clear seeing of otherlessness
ii.22-25**

The seer and the seen are the front and back of our habituated perceptual process. Yet it is only when perception is identified with that seer and seen take on the potent presence that gives to the sense of personal self so much authority and resilience. The fact is that we don't identify with 'our' perceptions and actions all the time. In fact most of the time we don't even notice the perceptual process at all. Even though the sensorimotor judgements involved are precise we are quite capable of picking our nose or wiping our eyes without projecting a sense of a wiper or picker onto the spontaneous process of picking or wiping, and even of doing it without noticing that it is happening.

Projecting a self onto the flow of life is a habit based on the necessities of socialisation that is closely related to how comfortable we feel about the situation that we are in. When we are very comfortable we are not 'self conscious' at all, and the sense of self does not assert itself. Feeling completely comfortable we become totally unconcerned about what is or could be happening and do not need to extract from the perceptual field. This is sabijasamadhi. Perceptions are extracted from the field of awareness either on the basis of the needs and impulses of the organism, or out of unconscious habit.

It does no good to pretend to believe that life is an illusion while still believing, or acting as if, there is someone who knows that. It is important to recognise that the seer and the seen, the subject and the object are equally illusory. It is just as important to realise the significance of that illusion, and that it is the fabric of the reality upon which our organism, as a part of that 'reality', depends. Whatever we propose to be behind or beyond that fabric is actually just another element in the illusory tapestry of our simulations. Yet something is actually happening. You know this beyond any doubt. Just as you know beyond any doubt that you exist within it, even if you can never be totally sure of exactly what this all is. There actually is something onto which our simulations are being projected, and out of which perceptions are being extracted, but it is not another thing, no matter how refined, subtle or metaphysical we may take it to be. As soon as we think or say anything about it we are already in our simulations. All things, all phenomena are perceptual extractions or simulations. Nevertheless that underlying something¹ is present and continuously available. Yoga is the process whereby we come to know and enjoy it, no longer caught by the approximations of the mind as they nevertheless continue to take place. This requires awareness to slip out of its projected duality between perceived external objects and a perceiving central subject.

Subject and object, seer and seen, like all dualities, generate, sustain, define and depend upon each other. One can not exist without the other. Just as beauty cannot exist without ugliness to define it, after cannot exist without before, nor up without down, inside without outside. Likewise life can not exist without death, right cannot exist without wrong, and good cannot exist without evil. All of these

¹ or more accurately: nothing

dualities are actually only concepts generated within the simulations of the brain. They have no intrinsic existence. Yet so deeply do we depend upon them to navigate the reality that we are generating that we act and think as if they have absolute, intrinsic existence. We have to do this, and we will continue to do this even when we see clearly that they do not exist other than as simulations. It never becomes immaterial which way we turn at a crossroad or apples leave their tree.

In the meantime our experience is quite clear. There is a definite, even if oscillating, boundary between seer and seen, subject and object. Even as the shape and nature of this boundary changes the fundamental duality remains. Within that duality the subject and object are linked or related by action, either physical or mental. Within that relationship they create, shape and define each other. Yet that relationship, which is based on separating the seer from the seen, is nothing other than a function of the perceptual mechanism. It is not an expression of that which actually is: only of that which is apparently happening. There is no intrinsic duality between what does not inherently exist: self and other, subject and object, seer and seen. Just as there is no intrinsic separation between right and left, front and back, right and wrong, good and evil. All opposites exist as the dynamic, shifting poles of a singularity that is inherently nondual, but appears to our perceiving mechanism as a duality. Not seeing the nondual core of duality is a source of deep confusion, and sustains the tortured conflicts and prejudices of the perspective of dualism within which opposites are set into irresolvable conflict with each other.

The deeply interwoven layers of perception and cognition are subtle and hard to distinguish. It is not easy to unravel them intellectually. They must be seen through with the help of the direct, deep

experience that meditation makes available as dhyana and samadhi. Then the differences between dualism and duality, duality and nonduality, bondage and freedom become clear. Duality is the dynamic of perception and cognition, and is therefore also the dynamic of manifestation. We need to distinguish between and separate front from back, left from right, up from down. We need to be able to distinguish between new and old, early and late, hard and soft. If we can't or don't we are unable to cope with life.

Yet if we do not see clearly the nature of the apparent relationship between all opposites we will be left torn by deep and irreconcilable conflicts. We may, consciously or unconsciously, seek to totally erase difficulty and pain, and the closer we get to doing so the less we become able to enjoy ease and pleasure. We cannot eliminate one pole of a dynamic singularity without eliminating the other. To want to do so, even to think as if it were possible to do so, is to be caught in the tyranny of dualism. The most subtle, and therefore dangerous, expression of dualism, is setting duality and nonduality against each other, especially in trying to escape from the former into the latter. This is a self indulgent mind game that cannot be sustained once nonduality has become a familiarity. If we arrive at a junction we have never been to before and there is no signpost we are going to have to think about, and then decide, which way to go².

Patanjali is not a dualist. His ongoing analysis of the dualities of perception and cognition make it clear that he is not caught anywhere in its trap. Yet this is not so easy for those who are to recognise. Unable to navigate the subtleties of Patanjali's words, only because they have not yet navigated the subtleties of their own perceptual processes, they mistake his meaning. It is true that

² even if our thinking is no more subtle than recognising the choice

ignorance is the source of the relationship between subject and object. However, this does not mean that they have no relationship. Nor does it mean that it is ignorance that relates opposites and wisdom that separates them. In fact it means that separating them is a deeper ignorance than relating them. Ignorance generates subject, object and relationship simultaneously. The perceived relationship between subject and object, which is one of separation, is illusory because subject and object are illusory. When ignorance dissolves, the subject and the object dissolve into their intrinsic nondual singularity³, and their projected relationship dissolves with them. This dissolution is the clear seeing within which neither a seer nor any seen are projected as separate entities onto the flow of awareness. In this state of consciousness there is neither self nor other.

Seeing continues to take place within the perceiving mechanism when the seer and the seen dissolve. This mechanism continues to respond to input on the basis of its conditioning and unique location within the indivisible wholeness of totality. Events still happen, deeds are still done, but no doer of any deed is experienced, nor any personal, local motive or power attributed to any action or reaction. Life becomes a seamless flow of impersonal, localised actions and reactions within which no element has any independence or autonomy. Within this flow objects and events are taken account of only as momentary functional necessities to actions that need to be taken⁴, or as impersonal expressions of the raw delight of existence.

³ which is actually an abundant emptiness or **shunyata**

⁴ the need for an action to be taken arises from the indivisible wholeness of totality as much as, or more than, it does from the organic needs and drives of the bodimind

When this is a temporary state of consciousness it is samadhi. When it has become a permanent disposition it is the clear seeing of Otherlessness, or the being state of yoga.

When objects and objectness have been seen through, otherness and selfness are also. When there is no sense of self, there is no sense of other. This is the final fruit of yoga as a process, within which the dualistic sense of separateness has completely dissolved. This embeds the individual organism consciously into the deep heart of totality in all of its indivisible wholeness. Consciousness no longer identifies itself with its localised instrument, while freely functioning through its limitations. Physical and mental activity are no longer attributed to their instrument. Attachment and aversion function only to express the life and nature of the organism. Ignorance has vanished to be replaced by a disposition of complete trust and spontaneous compassion, playfulness and delight. Where actions are required they take place, are chosen and enjoyed without being personalised, or their originating ground⁵ being obscured. They are known to be what they are: inextricable, imperfectable, inevitable nodes in the indivisible matrix of totality⁶. This is the deep wisdom of nonduality, wherein the nondual is not taken to be dual, while its dualistic appearance is navigated effortlessly.

This is of course nothing other than 'Self realisation', and is not a temporary awareness state but an ongoing psychosomatic orientation which is much more than an experiential or perceptual perspective. No longer caught in the dualistic dynamics of self and other neither independence nor autonomy are attributable to any

⁵ the indivisible wholeness of totality

⁶ mythologically known in India as Indra's Net

phenomenon. The indivisible wholeness of totality has become the recognised ground, source and power underlying and determining precisely all events, actions, feelings, thoughts and perceptions. All the dramatic intensities generated by the dualistic dynamic of self and other become a thing of the past. Hope, despair, frustration, regret, resentment, pride, shame, guilt, blame, hostility, contempt, anxiety all rest on the sense of self and its autonomous independence. The clear seeing of Otherlessness makes all such reactions impossible because the sense of self that had been their necessary foundation has been lost.

However it is not a drab and toneless fatalism; quite the reverse. To become conscious of the nondual identity of self and other, inside and outside, good and evil is to have become conscious of the deep and permanent ground from and within which all dualities take their apparent existence. This ground is continuously expressing itself through the dance of life and can be experienced as a deep, nourishing delight in impersonal awareness of being and its spontaneous expression. Then the dynamic of duality is experienced as a fascinating and engaging pageant within which the intrinsic delight of conscious existence contextualises everything with its subtle presence.

There no longer being any self to resist the dance of life with false claims of independence, autonomy and volition consciousness localised in and as a unique human bodimind can sit back and enjoy the show, even while its local organism participates fully within it. Just as we can not relinquish identification with perceptions and actions by distancing ourselves from them, we do not become distant from life when we know it is all an awesome simulation or dream. Quite the reverse: freedom depends on the gap that separates us from our experiences closing forever, so that we no

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longer resist anything that actually happens even as we dislike it. It is the sense of personal self that creates all resistance and isolating distance. Without it life unfolds in effortless intimacy with pain as much as with pleasure, failure no less than success.

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