

ASK THE AWAKENED

PART 1 : THE CROSS-ROADS

Why are you unhappy?
Because 99.9 per cent
Of everything you think,
And of everything you do,
Is for yourself -
And there isn't one.

CHAPTER 1 : *The Harlequinade*

Perhaps our most serious handicap is that we start on the wrong foot. In the end this is likely to be fatal, and, I fear, generally is. We have a basic conditioning, probably in some form of Christian religion, of which little remains today but its ethical content, or in one of the modern psychologies, that of Freud, Adler, or Jung, or in some scientific discipline, all of which are fundamentally and implacably dualist. Then the urge manifests, and we start reading.

Every time we happen on a statement or sentiment that fits in with our conditioned notions we adopt it, perhaps with

enthusiasm, at the same time ignoring, as though they did not exist, the statements or sentiments which either we did not like or did not understand. And every time we re-read the Masters or the sutras we seize upon further chosen morsels, as our own jig-saw puzzle builds up within us, until we have a personal patchwork that corresponds with nothing on Earth that could matter in the least. Not in a thousand million kalpas could such a process produce the essential understanding that the urge is obliging us to seek.

We are required to do exactly the opposite of all that. We are required to 'lay down' absolutely everything that is 'ours', and which is known as 'ignorance' - even though we regard it as knowledge. It is like stripping off clothes that have become personal. Then naked, but in a nakedness that does not recognise itself as such, we should go to the Masters, who will clothe us in the garments of the knowledge or understanding that we really need. It is their jig-saw we must complete, not 'ours', for their 'doctrine', what they have to reveal to us, is one whole and indivisible, and the statements and sentiments that we do not at once understand, rather than those that we think we do, are the ones that matter. One by one as we re-read, and finally all at once, their meaning will become manifest, and we shall at last understand what the Masters have to tell us. Then, and only then, can we acquire their understanding, which is the fulfilment of the urge.

As busy little bees, gathering honey here and there, and adding it to their stock in their hive, we are wasting our time, and worse, for we are building up that very *persona* whose illusory existence stands between our phenomenal selves and the truth of what we are, and which is what the urge in us is seeking. That 'laying down' of everything that is 'ours' has always been insisted upon by the Masters, but we affect to ignore it, precisely because that very notion of 'self' which is the centre of what we have to 'lay down' seeks to take charge of the operation, and generally succeeds in doing so, thereby frustrating from the start any hope of fulfilling the urge. Is there any wonder that we so rarely get anywhere at all?

It is interesting to note that in the recently discovered collection of sayings of Jesus there is one in which he formally adjured His disciples to divest themselves of all their 'garments'. It is understandable that such a statement should have been omitted by those later compilers who had no idea

what such a requirement could mean. But to us it should be a commonplace. As far back as Chuang-tse we find the story of the old monk who, in despair of knowing enlightenment before he died, went to see Lao-tse. On arrival Lao-tse came out to meet him, welcomed him, but told him to leave his followers and his baggage outside the gate, for otherwise he would not be admitted. The old man had no followers, and no baggage, but he understood, went in and found his fulfilment.

(© RKP, 1963)

[home/next](#)



[About this capture](#)

ASK THE AWAKENED : 2

Ask the Awakened

Since Bodhidharma, the recurrent menace that has overshadowed the Supreme Vehicle has been man's infatuation with himself. Whenever the succession of great Masters weakened in power or in quality the self-flattering mirror-polishing doctrine re-emerged.

Hui Neng and Shen Hui rescued the doctrine, but to-day it needs saving again, for, in the West at least, we are nearly all busy polishing our mirrors, or perfecting the hansom-cab as I have termed it, instead of understanding that neither the polisher nor mirror, perfecter nor cab, has ever or could ever exist.

What we need is another Bodhidharma, firm as a rock, fierce as a tiger, merciless in his 'grandmotherly kindness', and not afraid to tell Emperors of China that they are talking through their hats. And if we cannot hope for a Bodhidharma, then at least we need desperately a Hui Neng. Otherwise, though Buddhism may survive, the Supreme Vehicle will surely be lost.*

And only the Supreme Vehicle ultimately matters, for self-exalting Buddhism is pseudo-Buddhism, for it is a contradiction in terms, a soothing syrup or a drug: only the Supreme Vehicle carries the full and final message of the Tathagata.

As long as we do not perceive the fatuity of a phenomenon telling itself how marvellous it is, we will never come to the knowledge of that which we are when we have understood that, as phenomena, we are not.

* Hubert Benoit describes Bodhidharma as 'an "Awakener", someone who comes, with kindness but also with implacable firmness, to rouse us from the dream in which we are living'.

(© RKP, 1963)

[home/next](#)

* * * * *



[About this capture](#)

ASK THE AWAKENED : 3

The Cross-roads of Time and Space

'The present has no extension but intensity'. (Lama Anagarika Govinda.)

The present has no duration. Therefore it does not exist in the lineal dimension of time. It is not 'horizontal'. It has only a *point of contact* with seriality

The extension of the present is in another dimension to that of time. It is therefore at right-angles to time. The direction of measurement of this essentially timeless dimension is - *within*.

That is the reason of the importance instinctively given to *momentaneite*, to 'presence in the present', to 'spontaneity', and the reason of the creation of expressions such as 'the Eternal Present'.

The so-called present is our link with the dimension that includes the three we already know and use. It is the point at which Time cuts across Space, and as a concept it is spatial rather than temporal.

The present is not a fleeting moment: it is the only eternity. In Time 'lies' *samsara*: in the Present 'lies' *nirvana*. Time is the measurement of objectivity: the Present is the presence of subjectivity, in which everything potentially is, and from which, in Time, everything is apparently projected.

The assumed (so-called) present is our point of contact with *bodhi*-mind. It is the invisible portal through which intuition reaches us from the interior of ourselves, from that universal and limitless interior (spatially thought-of) which is all we ever were or ever will be, and which is out of time. It is the sole line of communication between our enveloping totality and our apparent existence as separate individual creatures, between our universality and our illusory particularity, between the noumenality and the phenomenality of all sentient beings.

The present alone in our experience is what IS, and phenomenally it is not; for it is only an imaginary division between past and future - like the equator between the northern and southern hemispheres. It is like a fictional line of latitude

that is a symbol rather than an existence, and yet represents a vital transmission from one sphere to another, from north to south, from past to future, neither of which has any reality in itself but each of which is a concept that artificially divides a continuity in space or in time.

The present alone represents that which we are in an apparent world in which we are not, since therein we are appearances (phenomena) only. We ourselves neither exist nor do we not exist. Neither existing *samsarically* nor not-existing *nirvanically*, we are nothing - in any way in which we can know ourselves - but as the *Present*.

Note: The present is the dimension I have indicated by the image of 'vertical' being or seeing, which is an essential discrimination for comprehending in what manner we (sentient beings) can be understood to BE. It is also the dimension in which occurs whatever actuality there may be in the expression 'living in Zen', and in 'when I am hungry, I eat; when I am weary, I sleep' - in the manner in which the awakened Masters themselves did that.

(© RKP, 1963)

[home/next](#)

* * * * *



[About this capture](#)

ASK THE AWAKENED : 4

He Who Gets Slapped

When I was a child I was taken to the circus. There I saw a long series of entrancing performances that caused men and animals to execute every kind of astonishing and unexpected manoeuvre. And throughout, but particularly when the scenario and its appurtenances were being changed, there appeared a grotesque personage, vaguely resembling a human being, who interfered with everything but effected nothing. He fell over the carpets, bumped himself against every object, was slapped and kicked, and then took all the applause as though he were responsible for everything. We thought him very funny and laughed at him like anything.

Now that I am no longer a child he seems to me to be a perfect image of the I-concept, whose function is apparently his, and whose performance corresponds in all respects with that of the clown, in the circus which is our life. In all respects but one: we laughed at the clown in the circus, but we take seriously the clown in the circus of life, although the one is as ineffectual as the other. We even believe that he is responsible for the performance, whereas as children we could see that he was responsible for nothing that happened, that his 'will' was totally ignored by the circumstances to which he was subjected, and that in every event he was an unnecessary nuisance.

In one respect, however, our attitude is unchanged: in both the circuses we love the clown dearly and consider him more important than anything else in the show.

(© RKP, 1963)

[home/next](#)

* * * * *

ASK THE AWAKENED : 5

That I Am

When I have looked at a jug I have supposed that eye-subject was looking at jug-object. But eye-subject is itself an object, and one object cannot be the subject of another object. Both eye-supposed-subject and the jug are objects of I-subject. That is apparent transcendence of subject-object.

But only when we realise that, in split-mind, I-as-subject must always be itself an object while it also has its own supposed-object, do we understand that this constitutes an infinite regression, and that final transcendence is the understanding that I am not-subject, for, since in reality there are no objects, there cannot be a subject.

No-objects and no-subject constitute impersonality, the resultant of the negation of each member of every pair of opposites, or No-Entity.

Only whole mind can know this, and that is 'that I am'.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 6

Enlightenment By Non-Action

All so-called volition is a manifestation of the I-concept. *Who* seeks enlightenment? As long as it is sought under the compulsion of the I-concept how could it possibly be realised?

On the other hand, as soon as the I-concept disappears, it is seen to be there all the time.

But the I-concept only wants pseudo-enlightenment, by which it can pose as a sage; realisation, involving its own liquidation,

does not appear at all desirable, and it will place every possible obstacle in the way.

This is the reason why any and every 'method', 'discipline', etc., subject to the I-concept, must be a path leading away from home. Since all action that is not non-action, or, as we see it, spontaneous, is performed under the compulsion of the I-concept - for there is no other 'actor', that is no real 'actor' at all - enlightenment or satori can only be the consequence of non-action.

Service

Gratifying the I-concept can never render a service. That, no doubt, is why the Masters never did it, for rendering service was their sole use of living.

Yet it is the sole method of what we regard as rendering service.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 7

Silence ... 1

When the Maharshi tells us that silence is a more potent medium than speech we tend to be incredulous, for to us silence is merely the negation of noise.

When he states that 'stillness is the sole requisite for the realisation of the Self as God', we know that he refers to stillness of the mind. So silence also means silence from thoughts, or, as we might prefer to say, absence of cerebration. The negation of noise as an aid to thought could never be in question, for thought must be a barrier to spiritual understanding.

The potency of silence, of which he sometimes speaks, as indeed do others, is to be sought in the interval between thoughts, of infinitesimal duration to split-mind, but without, or of infinite, duration, in itself, since it is intemporal. To him who experiences it, it might have any conceivable duration, though to an observer it can have none. In itself it is never a momentary thing, for it is the permanent background of what we experience as time, the reality rather than the background, and in a feeble image, the screen on to which the ever-moving pictures of conceptual life are projected.

Its incalculable potency then becomes apparent, for it is no other than whole-mind.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 8

Reflections

Awareness is I-subject.

Truth is that which lies in a dimension beyond the reach of thought.

What is your trouble? Mistaken identity.

'Birth' is the birth of the I-concept. 'Death' is the death of the I-concept. There is no other birth. There is no other death.

The 'world' is only a picture projected on to a screen.

I am pure Subject: everything I perceive is my object, but, as object, ultimately my Self.

There is no Path! Paths lead from here to there. How can a path lead from here to here? It could only lead *away* from home.

All *methods* require a *doer*. The only 'doer' is the I-concept.

All objects are necessarily untouchable.

Within and without, above and below - what is the resolution of these opposites? A further direction of measurement.

Whole-mind has no 'thoughts', thoughts *are* split mind.

The 'aggregate of latent tendencies', held together by an I-concept, is that which reincarnates - whatever that may be.

How do we know that the world is transitory, that time is passing, that nothing stands still? We could not know that our river was flowing unless we could put one foot on the bank!

There is no entity, only a continuum - and that continuum is consciousness.

Humility is the inevitable condition resulting from the absence of an I-concept. Without such absence humility can only be a mask for pride, which is its counterpart.

Science is concerned with objects, which are unreal. If it concerned itself with the subject of the objects it might find out what they really are.

Mind is the dynamic aspect of matter.

The 'present' does not exist objectively: it is subject itself. The 'future' being unknown to us always, we live entirely in the past.

Searching is trying to see the Self (Reality) as an object. But, all the time, that object is Subject.

Karma and Reincarnation, and all and all, belong to the dream-world. The dream goes on....

Meditation is exercising the I-concept.

'He who is in the habit of looking down upon others has not got rid of the *erroneous idea of a self*.' (Hui Neng, p. 40.)

'Non-Action' is what we call Spontaneity.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 9

The Readjustment

Awakening is a readjustment. The state is always present, is our normal, permanent, real nature - as the Masters of all the doctrines never tire of telling us - but the conscious experience of it is denied us by a deviation of subjectivity on to a concept that, as such, is unreal, an object in consciousness appearing as its own subject. Until this phantom is exorcised by being exposed, subjectivity appears to be bound, and we cannot experience it as it is in reality.

When this anomalous situation is understood, we need to start putting this understanding into practice, that is not just thinking about it, but experiencing it. There have been people, apparently born 'ready', for whom the fact of understanding has been sufficient in itself to produce the experience, but for the rest of us habit and practice are a necessary prelude to conscious experience of our reality.

However it is important to understand that there is nothing to acquire, but only an error to be exposed, because acquiring necessarily involves using, and so strengthening that spurious 'I' whose dissolution we require.

For this merely a readjustment is needed, such readjustment being the abandonment of identification with an inexistent individual self, an abandonment which leaves us unblindfold and awake in our eternal nature.

To seek to persuade ourselves that we do not exist as individual entities is, however, to ask an eye to believe that what it is looking at is not there. But it is not we alone who have no existence as entities: there are not any anywhere in the reality of the cosmos, never have been, and never could be. Only whole-mind can reveal this knowledge as direct cognition which, once realised, is obvious. That is the total readjustment. And only 'I' remains.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 10

Silence ... 2

Silence, regarded metaphysically, is considerably different from conventional silence, dualistically defined, silence as one element in a comparison of opposites, silence as the opposite and complement of noise. The silence which the Maharshi states is more powerful than speech, a more potent medium of instruction than words, the silence in which, and by which, occurs the transmission of mind via mind in which the ultimate doctrine of the Buddha was handed down from patriarch to patriarch according to the Ch'an Masters, is rather the background of the time-illusion, the interval between thoughts that is normally imperceptible to divided mind, of infinitesimal duration, but which is in itself intemporal, of no, or of infinite duration. If we can seize it, so we are told, and hold it, the mind stays open, and we are awake at last.

What, then, is it - this metaphysical silence? Clearly it is the 'Buddha-mind' of Ch'an, the 'Witness' of Vedanta, the 'Father' of Christianity, i.e. whole-mind. The mechanism of dualism seems to be that of the escapement of a clock, which is also an instrument for recording time. One half momentarily stops the flow of time, and then the other, tic-toc, tic-toc. So does each half of split-mind, tic-toc, tic-toc, and the interval between each tick is pure movement, the background, the intemporal reality which, measured by each alternative tick, becomes time as we know it. And the tic-toc, the alternative stoppage, is the comparison of opposites, the activity of split-mind, which we know as thought and mentation.

We can now see why every one of the awakened tells us *ad nauseam* that all we need to do is to arrest the movement of thought in order to know whole-mind and find ourselves awake. It explains also why *wu* or *satori* is always precipitated by a sudden sound, anything from a clap of thunder to the snapping of a twig, or, indeed, any other sensory perception whatever. Such perception momentarily arrests the eternal tic-toc of thought and, the subject being ripe, whole-mind takes possession and is no longer split.

That the awakened continue to know divided mind, in communicating with those who remain identified, is evident, but for them that condition is the abnormal, and the state of whole-mind the normal, instead of the contrary as with the rest of us. But it is surely an error to suppose that we do not know whole-mind in our daily life - for the consciousness that is aware of our having thought is certainly that, a consciousness that is ever awake, is always present, and that alone is 'real'.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 11

The Universal Presence

Subject and object are the essential tic-toc. Phenomena are whole-mind tic-tocking as subject/object, seer and seen, which are a split unity in time.

Every object is a facet of subject, and nothing but subject itself, whereas subject is an objectivisation of subjectivity, and, as such, quite unreal.

Realised, that which is whole and real is mind, unself, the void - or whatever label you may use.

In conceptual language can one point more nearly in the right direction - towards the universal presence?

Note: Split-mind is a time-piece, and, as such its mechanism is an escapement, each half of which momentarily arrests the flow of movement, in alternation - tic-toc, tic-toc.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 12

Verity

ONE: What are you and how do you know it?

TWO: I am pure consciousness, and I know it because I love.

ONE: The first is so, the second is not.

TWO: Why is that?

ONE: Because you say it.

TWO: I don't understand.

ONE: Pure consciousness cannot say 'I love'.

TWO: Why not?

ONE: It cannot be said by pure consciousness, but only by an identified object.

TWO: What then can I say as pure consciousness?

ONE: Pure consciousness cannot say 'I love' even via an identified object, but it can say 'I am love'. If the answer to my question had come direct from whole-mind that is the way you would have transmitted it.

TWO: Then those teachers who use the form 'I ...', in order to reveal the truth, are wrong to do so?

ONE: It might be better to say that the form of words in question is open to objection.

TWO: Because?

ONE: They are speaking to the identified, and the identified cannot speak direct from pure consciousness. Therefore when they repeat the words, applying them to themselves, inevitably the I-concept intervenes and seeks to apply the statement to itself. It cannot be excluded as long as it is there.

TWO: By saying what I am, rather than what I do, that is avoided?

ONE: It is nearer the truth.

TWO: An example to make it clearer?

ONE: As many as you wish: the Maharshi did not love - never, never: he *was* love, or, more exactly, *karuna-caritas/prajna-gnosis*. Pure consciousness is and does not.

TWO: And that applies to Jesus also?

ONE: Did he say 'God loves' or 'God is love'?

TWO: If I have understood, then love itself does not exist, nor hate?

ONE: Of course not.

TWO: Nor impersonal, unpossessive love, asking no return and unaccompanied by jealousy?

ONE: That, too, would be a 'thing'.

TWO: Nor affectivity, knowledge, ignorance, cognition, *prajna*, *karma*?

ONE: Things, all things! The unending dualistic process of imagining entities and things!

TWO: You have been leading me astray.

ONE: Neither more nor less than those who knew so much better than I. Truth can only be pointed at - *tant bien que mal*. The sages often enunciated an apparent doctrine - and then casually mentioned that of course nothing of the kind really existed. At all costs they sought to avoid the danger of dogma.

TWO: The closer to the truth the less meaning words have to the many?

ONE: At first the words 'I am love' would seem nonsense: at the last they alone mean anything.

TWO: Because they alone are nearly true? Or 'I am knowledge'?

ONE: Knowledge, cognition, gnosis; love, affectivity, compassion; *prajna*, *karuna*; *sat*, *chit*, *ananda*, being, consciousness, bliss - none exists as a 'thing' and all are one.

TWO: Then 'I am consciousness' or 'I am being' are better still?

ONE: There is no 'better', each is an aspect of the others. But 'conscious' needs no 'ness', just as 'being' can have no article, which would make it an entity, as 'ness' would make the former a thing.

TWO: One should be content with 'I am'?

ONE: One should hold one's tongue! If you must gab - speak to someone who will understand however incorrectly you say it.

TWO: Then how can one teach?

ONE: Those who were qualified to teach, those few, like the Maharshi, said that silence was more efficacious, but in early stages teaching can only be given via a series of untruths diminishing in inveracity in ratio to the pupil's apprehension of the falsity of what he is being taught.

TWO: That is devastating!

ONE: Not at all: it is just education. Truth cannot be communicated: it can only be laid bare.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 13

The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth

Philosophers, theologians, moralists, sociologists - anyone who spends time considering the troubles of mankind, their wrongs, griefs, miseries, conflicts, ambitions, personal and general - have analysed these things and attributed them to almost everything from Satan to Heredity. Literature is largely composed of the problems arising from this search for the cause of what is called 'Evil'.

But you have only to sit back and think for a few moments in order to perceive that what is called 'Evil' has only one cause, a most obvious one, that is neither Satan nor Heredity nor anything in between. It is the I-concept, the notion of an individuality, of a separate self.

Take that away, and nothing deriving from it can remain - for all derive from pride, greed, envy, desire, ambition, etc., all of which are manifestations of egoism or what is commonly called self-ishness.

Were every human being suddenly to lose that notion - which we know to be unfounded and quite unreal - all these evils, indeed all 'evil', would automatically cease to exist.

That is theoretical: we know of no means of bringing that about, and it would be the famous millennium. Only an infinitesimal minority of 'individuals' have succeeded in realising that they are not such. But is there any reason why the upbringing and normal education of every child should not be directed, indeed consecrated to that end?

Such a process would not produce a millenium created by self-less men and women? No, it would not, but in whatever degree it succeeded in weakening the notion of 'self', the preoccupation with 'self', to just that degree would life on Earth come to resemble the kingdom of Heaven.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 14

I Am Not

The Negative Path

The Buddha alone seems explicitly to have preached the doctrine which declares that the universal presence knows no I. Here the impersonality of pure consciousness, inaccessible to the process of identification, represents the plenitude of the void

The innovation hereby involved lay in avoidance of the intrusion of the I-concept, which occurs elsewhere every time ultimate reality is identified with Atma or I-Reality. Both visions are true vision, but that of the Buddha obviates an immense obstacle.

The words 'I am not' are senseless. Is this not a clear intimation that they should be true?

Pure consciousness is, is what is, nothing else is - so I am not.

When we shall have digested that may we not hope that at last we shall find that indeed we are not?

Having searched for the truth in the guise of 'I Am', perhaps we shall find it in the guise of 'I Am Not'.

We have said that *we* are *it*, but we cannot be it - for there are no *we*. We have said that *it* is *we*, but it cannot be - for the same reason. There being no *we*, there is only *it*, unknown to itself. Nor can it be - for there is no thing. That must be why it is called the void, and the void must be void just because nothing is and there is no one to be.

And the universal presence is at the same time a universal absence - for there is nothing to be present and nowhere for a presence to be.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 15

Perception

A *perceiving* is in itself pure, i.e. impersonal and real. The interpretation that follows introduces subject and object, and the result is a concept that is unreal.

That is why there is no perceiver, nothing perceived, and only the *perceiving* really is. It is a manifestation of pure consciousness.

Thisness

All 'things' and all sentiments are interpretations only, and interpretations cannot be real in any sense.

If this is understood with insight it becomes clear that only mind *is*, that it is an impersonal non-entity, and that whoever is conscious of this is this and nothing else.

'Reality' is Necessarily Intemporal

Any object of perception appears as a reality in Time, but since there was a period before it existed and there will be, or is now, a period in which it has ceased to exist, it cannot be a 'reality'.

This demonstrates that what is real in Time is unreal in Intemporality, or, as we more categorically see it, the object is not real at all.

There is, no doubt, nothing whatever that is 'real' in Time.

Isness

Non-manifestation is isness. Manifestation is isness objectified by an apparent subject that is itself an object. This, we, as that pseudo-subject, can recognise as one kind of that which we know as a dream.

Knowing, understanding this, we should find ourselves abolished - so that the dream should vanish, and only non-manifestation, timeless and immutable, remain.

Milarepa Too

'... to discover the non-existence of the personal ego and, therefore, the fallacy of the popular idea that it existeth ... In realising the non-existence of the personal ego the mind must be kept in quiescence.' (p. 141)

'... to subdue the illusion of belief in a personal ego ...' (p. 245)

ASK THE AWAKENED : 16

Vertical Vision ... 1

Phenomenal life, the waking dream, may be said to take place on a plane surface - not as it is visually perceived but temporally. On that plane surface every action is followed by its reaction, every cause by its effect: this is the world of *karma*, of the force of circumstances, and is what we know as our life.

But an awakened sage lives and thinks vertically. If his body is flowing horizontally in the stream of time like the rest of mankind, his mind has acquired the vertical dimension which rises at right-angles from each moment of that time-river. While B hits A because A has hit B, tic-toc, the sage has no such reaction, and knows no occasion for such automatic reflex - for, from the vertical dimension, the height from which he

perceives, he sees not each moment's incident but the whole picture stretched out before him. He may ignore the blow, or he may turn the other cheek for the striker's sake, but the detachment of his vision will admit of no reaction. Perceiving the preceding circumstances of the blow, he is free from constraint to react to it, and the chain-reaction is broken.

To A and the rest of mankind, the sage's inaction is unaccountable, foolish or contemptible, though a few may regard it as wise. In fact it is none of those things: it is the exercise of a freedom which he alone can have.

Vertical vision is a consequence, not a method. It cannot be practised. But the understanding of it, its being envisaged, may point towards the state of wisdom from which it will result.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 17

Golden Silence

The faculty that distinguishes man from all other animals is that of speech, and he makes use of it with the enthusiasm of a convert and the lack of moderation of a child with a new toy. The popular notion of government, at all levels, is government by talking, and often it amounts to little else. The inefficiency of this is demonstrated by the fact that when obvious security is at stake, as in the case of ships at sea and armies on land, government by talking is abandoned and there is substituted for it the rule of one man, whose word is law and whose words of command are so brief as to ignore syntax. When it has happened that in the first enthusiasm of popular revolutions that natural law has been temporarily abrogated the ship has been known to sink and the army to be beaten.

It is instructive, and also entertaining, to observe that one of man's methods of showing respect, on the death of a celebrated individual or in commemoration of a catastrophe, is to observe

one minute, or even two, of silence, that is to refrain from talking for that all too brief period; and that has been apt to prove too great a strain for regular application. It would appear that the maintenance of silence is well-nigh insupportable to the average man, and at the same time he cherishes an illusory notion that almost anything can be achieved by chatter. Verbiage is his primary occupation, and his method of self-assertion, and in many countries even a musical programme on the radio rarely lasts for more than a few minutes without being interrupted by an outburst of entirely superfluous 'gab'. 'Gab', in short, is his idea of living, and he expresses his ideas, even the most erudite, with the exception of higher mathematics, in the greatest possible number of words instead of in the fewest.

But talking is probably the greatest hindrance to the development of man's spiritual possibilities, and of all forms of activity the one which most efficiently bars his way to that higher state of consciousness which is his unique possibility, his right, and his only certain justification. This is hardly an original observation; the Ch'an masters evidently knew it - since they spoke so briefly as to be barely comprehensible, and the most vital sutras, shorn of subsequent repetition, give their message in a few lines. The fact is recognised in Christianity by the Trappists and in India yogis impose on themselves long periods of silence, and, when abroad, single days at stated periods.

This need not be taken to mean that even the most serious occidentals who follow the urge towards enlightenment should abandon speech. In the course of every twenty-four hours one-third is already devoted to silence, but they might perhaps realise that chatter is not only a hindrance, as has been pointed out, but is quite clearly a psychological mechanism of defence against progress on that path on the part of the *skandha*-impulses operating in collaboration with the I-concept developed by the phenomenal 'individual'. It is neither difficult nor rare to be able to observe that mechanism in operation, and in such cases at least mental discipline, as it is called, is necessary, though the element of discipline should be merely a result, the result of understanding and observing that mechanism at work. This understanding need in no way hinder communication of ideas, of all kinds of interesting observations, of humour, even of gossip - for there are sixteen hours available for all that as well as for periods of silence.

Perhaps there need not even be anything so formal as periods of silence, but just an abandonment of absolutely superfluous 'gab'?

ASK THE AWAKENED : 18

Debris

Subjectivity is what is left when all objects are ignored. Why? Because that is the process of resolving subject-object into Pure Consciousness.

* * *

People who lecture are pseudo-*jivan-muktas*. If they do not represent the I-concept posing as the Self, why would they do it? If they did not give that impression, why would people go and listen to them?

This does not apply to answering questions, nor to private conversation - which be just the interpretation of the words of the Masters. Pseudo-*éveillés* cannot fail to mislead, however 'good' their intentions. These are hard words, for the intentions are probably nearly always 'good', but if there is truth in them - is it not necessary to point it out?

* * *

Realisation is a matter of *becoming conscious* of that which is already realised.

* * *

Split-mind is composed of thoughts, and does not otherwise exist. Whole-mind is devoid of thoughts, and is 'real'. Therefore the splitting of the mind must be the division into two-sided thoughts, for whole-mind is the source of thoughts.

* * *

It is not the eye that sees, it is not the ear that hears: there is seeing, there is hearing. Who sees? Who hears? *No one*. That is the truth. For the seeing and the seen, the hearing and the heard are impersonality, impersonal consciousness.

* * *

'Reality' (Self in Vedanta) is your ever-present consciousness.

* * *

The space-time continuum is mind - mind in manifestation, not pure consciousness - static mind, let us say, whose counterpart is the dynamic aspect we recognise as thought. Matter is probably not different from its matrix - the space-time continuum.

* * *

If Bhagavan* is the Self, we too are Bhagavan and Bhagavan is us. His words are ours; listening to him we ourselves are speaking. He appears to be without (far away in space and time), but he is also within (like any *Guru*). He is no entity. I am no entity. We are no entity: we are Unself. There is only one - and we are that. Each of us is all, and all are one. There is only one Self, and we are all (each) that.

* * *

The explanation of Maharshi's teaching, 'Who am I?', focuses split-mind on its subject, i.e. whole-mind, impersonal subjectivity, the Father, and so transcends the duality of split-mind (subject-object). 'Who am I?' is not just an intellectual exercise, as has been thought, but a technique for resolving the basic dualism which bars the way to synthesis.

* * *

Realisation

A man who is seeking for realisation is not only going round searching for his spectacles without realising they are on his

nose all the time, but also were he not actually looking through them he would not be able to see what he is looking for!

His only trouble is not knowing that they are there, and that alone hinders him from looking in the right direction. But the right direction is not without, for realisation can never be an object of vision. The spectacles in question are mirrors that reflect the subject that is looking for itself.

* * *

It is probably an error, and a fundamental error, to seek the resolution of each pair of opposites in some third quality or 'thing'. There is only a common factor behind all relative interpretations.

In doing as we do we are still subject to the notion that 'things' with names really *are*! But there are no two 'things', and there is no third 'thing' - just a common factor, or background, *which is 'real'*.

* * *

Perhaps a fifth dimension of space, or the notion of multiple dimensions beyond those we know and can use, plus time, are vague hypotheses, laboratory instruments that are better discarded? Would it not be more accurate to envisage not further directions of measurement, which we are not able to conceive, but a permanent substratum that is common to the dimensions we actually use, on to which transient images are projected, a continuum transcending, permeating and enveloping them, a continuum that itself is 'real'?

* * *

The universe is not real in itself, but only as a projection of underlying 'reality'. Phenomena are real as projections on to the 'screen' of 'reality'.

ASK THE AWAKENED : PART II

THE NEGATIVE WAY

**The being
Of separate beings
Is non-separate being**

(Chuang-Tse)

Chapter 19 : Ne Plus Ultra

**It is necessary to understand that I Am,
In order that I may know that I Am Not,
So that, at last, I may realise that
I Am Not, therefore I Am.**

ASK THE AWAKENED : 20

Why Lazarus is Still Laughing ...

It may seem to be impossible to dispose of the notion 'I am'. It is like a cork. The moment one ceases to hold it down up it pops, and anyhow - who holds it down? One may say that there

is only the void, but then there is the void and the sayer that there is only the void, which is a duality. And if one says that the void is I, then I am also the void. Therefore I still (objectively) am.

Quite evidently the inexistence of 'I' cannot be said. But can it be thought? That which is normally meant by thought is potentially capable of verbal expression, so that it cannot be thought either.

What is 'I' if it is not a presence? I am a presence, if anything. But where there is a presence there can be an absence. Therefore if I am a presence I can also be an absence. But then, of course, an absence implies a presence. An absence is also a presence, a presence an absence, and 'I' am not-I, and 'Not-I' am I. Non-existence implies existence, so that I cannot not exist without existing. No, I cannot be disposed of, for in disposing of me my existence is thereby posed. I am a concept, and all concepts are dualistic, so that my inexistence cannot be thought.

But to conclude from that dualistic analysis that I necessarily am in reality would be unwarranted. Dualistically I inevitably am, but, it seems to me, non-dualistically, and equally inevitably, that I cannot possibly be. The mere fact that dualistically I must be proves that non-dualistically I cannot be.

Have we not succeeded in establishing something that cannot be established in any other way? Manifestation is a manifestation of non-manifestation, and non-manifestation is a non-manifestation of manifestation: there cannot not be manifestation dualistically, and for that reason in reality there cannot be manifestation. So that is why 'from the beginning not a thing is' (Hui Neng). Neither thing nor entity, neither world nor I. The world is my concept, built of sense-perceptions: no concepts can be real. I am a concept, built of sense-perceptions: I cannot be real.

That, surely, is the whole truth? Conceptually I must be, and via me the world must be. But beyond conceptualism nothing is, and that is the void. The void is also a non-void, or a plenum, in so far as it is a concept. There is just absolutely nothing that can be said about this. But it can be cognised, by

cognition that is definitely beyond thought. Trying to say it, trying to make it a concept is futile.

So what can we do? When the notion that I am comes to me - I can still laugh.

Having laughed at the notion that I am - and indeed it is far funnier, because more absurd, than the notion that I am not, which raised a good laugh when one first noticed it - what then? Conceptually I am, and how. Supra-conceptually there is laughter. Which do I choose? There is no choosing. I am and I am not - as long as I live.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 21

The Illuminating Vision

The fact of conceiving that which is expressed by the words 'I am' makes 'that I am' an object of the conceiving subject. Ultimately, it seems, I am necessarily an object. In fact a subject is necessarily an object in so far as it is seen as a subject.

What, then, is the subject of which I am the object? There is only one subject that cannot become an object, because it cannot be conceived and has no existence in duality - and that is 'I am not'.

And that, no doubt, is why 'I am not, therefore I am'. It is also why I cannot possibly be, because, in order to be, I must become an object - and because I cannot be that, I am not. And why, not being, yet I am.

Subject and object are then seen as one. We are both subject and object, alternatively in duality, simultaneously, fused, in unicity.

And is not that the 'Truth of Ch'an' - as Huang Po assured us?

* * *

If Being is subject, and everything, including myself (in the dream) is object, then I am object, and subject only in so far as I am Being, like everything else. But Being is also an object and is not.

* * *

Because I am not - everything is.
Because I am - not a thing is.
Everything is, because Now (the now-moment) is
always present.

* * *

When subject becomes object, object thereby becomes subject.
For each is both, and both are each.

* * *

But neither I-object nor I-subject, but only I-am-not can see
subject and object as one.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 22

Irreverence

The Buddha was sometimes naughty, but he may have done it to tease. For instance he was fond of saying that *Nirvana* is the same as *Samsara*. That is ridiculous or obvious according to where you happen to be standing.

Hui Neng was more downright - but then he was a young peasant. When someone asked him whether it was the pennant that flapped, or the wind, he replied quite frankly that it was the man's own mind that was flapping.

As for the Buddha's little jest, the answer is equally obvious and, in fact, the same. Where split-mind sees *Samsara*,

whole-mind sees *Nirvana*. And they themselves are only the same in so far as neither of them exists - as he would have been the first to admit, and, no doubt, often pointed out after enunciating a doctrine about them.

No wonder the monks burnt his images when they were feeling cold and were short of fuel?

ASK THE AWAKENED : 23

Baubles of the Mind

Sutras and the Void

The philosophers of the early centuries of this era who put their sutras into the mouth of the Buddha seem to us to have rendered them as incomprehensible as words could make them. If they did it in order to confuse the likes of us - they succeeded magisterially.

In the Diamond Sutra they speak of *Samsara* and *Nirvana* as being identical. In the Heart Sutra they go further; they speak of form, and the other disparate *skandhas*, then the Chain of Causation, and finally the Four Holy Truths, in fact all *dharmas*, and declare them to be identical with Emptiness, and Emptiness to be identical with them, and in every possible way and from every possible point of view. In short they point out that all *dharmas* are void.

But these *dharmas* are all concepts, baubles of the mind, and they treat them solemnly as though they existed in their own right and were 'things' solidly and indubitably existing. Then they proceed to state the contrary, and finally, with a double somersault, the contrary of the contrary. At first sight this looks like a precursor of the ko-an technique that developed some five centuries later in Japan.

Yet without all these gymnastics the doctrine appears to be quite clear and simple and obvious, and I think it must appear so in the light of the later T'ang masters whose teaching was largely based upon these sutras and the Lanka. All these *dharmas* are just concepts, perfectly inexistent, and are interpretations by divided mind of that which whole-mind knows as what we call a void. The one perceives the world of multiplicity and phenomena in space and time; the other knows emptiness (though it is divided mind that so calls it) and noumenon. Evidently they are the same - but their identity lies in the mind, not in the contrary interpretations that are 'perceived', for the apparent difference depends on which eye is looking at them.

What advantage can there be, one may ask, in trying to see contraries as identical, with the eye that can only see contraries? One can only suppose that it was a technique devised in order to prise open the other eye so that both contraries could be seen and recognised as one whole, and the contraries of contraries and their contraries, and so on *ad infinitum*.

I wonder if all this is necessary for us, and whether it could possibly be efficacious - for contraries cannot be seen as identical by the reasoning mind whose *modus operandi* is a function of its inherent duality, so that it is not possible, whatever anyone may think or pretend, to 'see' *Samsara* and *Nirvana* as identical, for no two separate thoughts can ever occur simultaneously. Such 'identity' as can be apprehended by reasoning is not such, but only a reasoned assimilation of two different things that are seen to resemble one another. *Identity is quite other*. It is an act of direct vision on the part of whole-mind.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 24

Ultimate and Unconditioned 'Reality' is Negative and Void

Let us be clear about this and express it in our occidental manner of speech, and try to see what exactly is this idea of a void - for it is an idea like any other.

The phenomenal, objective, relative world of sense-impressions is an interpretation by divided and reasoning mind (which operates by a comparison of opposites) of noumenon, the absolute, subject, none of which (if you regard them as different in any way or as aspects of one whole) it is able directly to perceive. And the contrary, with which everything here in question is to be identified, is called Emptiness. As the Void it is the counterpart of Plenum, and all these qualities, these *dharmas*, treated as though they were 'things', are therefore elements in that plenitude. A void, however, is a total negative. If you think of Reality or Being, as you are taught to do, you are assuming something positive, and each of these positives is inevitably accompanied by its negative, which we have to term Non-reality and Non-being. It is this negative that is the Void or Emptiness, and that negative implies its constituent plenum, so that this Void, being that which is not, is also that which appears to be, i.e. Non-manifestation manifested - which is the phenomenal and apparent universe or *Samsara*.

This surely is the real message of these sutras - that our intuition must apprehend the negative reality of the Void in order to comprehend that its positive element is Appearance, and that thus, *and not the other way round*, must they be seen if their identity is to be assimilated and not merely assumed.

Note: Re *dharmas*, 'Their true nature is a no-nature, and their no-nature is their true nature; for all *dharmas* have one mark only, i.e. no mark ... for there are not two natures of *dharma*, but just one single is the nature of all *dharmas*. And the true nature of all *dharmas* is a no-nature, and their no-nature is their true nature. It is thus that all points of possible attachment are abandoned.' (Prajnaparamita Sutra, cited by Dr. Edward Conze in his 'Diamond Sutra' p. 36.)

'This *Dharma*, i.e. the ultimate reality in both its objective and subjective form....' (Op. cit., p. 37.)

The 'real' nature of all manifestation is *no-nature*, and of all ideas of 'reality' and of being - for all such are concepts or *dharmas*. They are directly negative or void, and only indirectly positive and relative.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 25

Nothing in Something

To look upon the Void as an emptiness that exists somewhere in a cosmic fullness will never open the mind to its wholeness. Vision must start afresh by realising that a cosmic plenitude is an imaginary implication, and that the cosmos itself is not. The Void is not nothing somewhere within something: that something is nothing, there is nowhere within it, and the Void is that.

Something in Nothing

It is the basic notion, the fundamental conception that is erroneous. People start by assuming reality, a something, a positively existing continuum, and then seek to situate the Void somewhere therein. But it is the Void we have to take as the basic notion, the fundamental conception, the continuum that is a non-continuum - and then see that if there is anything apparent anywhere it can only be in that.

That Which is Not. I

We must go further! Just as we have realised that 'I am not in reality', and that there is no being therein, so we have to understand that there is no reality either.

Reality is just a manifestation of No-reality, for only nothing can be said to exist. In fact, of course, nothing exists, which means that it does not exist as nothing.

That again is the Void, directly approached or seen as it is not.

I am Not

That which I think is 'I am' is really nothing of the kind: that is that-which-*Is* - experience, consciousness, being. I am not any of those things, or all of them, for no such thing as I exists. 'I' is only a technique whereby experience is registered in a manner that is interpreted as 'personal'.

That which I think is 'I am' is experience, consciousness, being, but *they* are not either except in so far as they are not.

They are not, therefore they are. For so it is.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 26

The Ultimate Understanding

The essential understanding is that in reality nothing is. This is so obvious that it is not perceived. We quote Hui Neng's 'From the beginning not a thing is' without apprehending its full significance. We refer to the Void and Emptiness without realising what is implied. What is meant is just what is said, i.e. that nothing is - that Nothing alone is what is, not that no thing is real in Something, not that in positive Being, which we tacitly assume, no object is real. Positive Being is not to be assumed, but negative Being - Non-being. It is non-being only that is, and there is nothing but that. It is only in function of Non-being that being *seems to be*.

Non-being is; and it is because Non-being is, and only Non-being, that any being can be, for being is a manifestation of Non-being.

The Realisation of the Void

Being must be replaced by Non-being - in order that anything may be.

For Being is a projection of Non-being.

This is the necessary realisation, and, perhaps, the ultimate - that Nothing alone is, that there is only Is-not, that Is is only by virtue of Is-not - for nothing but Nothing is of itself, and only the isness of Is-not can be.

That is the realisation of the Void.

Note: This is the deep meaning of the Buddha's words in the Diamond Sutra about Bodhisattvas knowing no Being, and of Hui Neng's declaration that we must rid ourselves of the idea of Being as well as of self. Its meaning has been masked by the article 'a' usually given it elsewhere, which appears to assimilate it to a term for self, ego, individual, whereas it is to be applied to the plane of 'reality'.

The Void (Non-Being) alone is complete.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 27

Because It Is Not...

Authority is comforting: let us seek it. In Chapter 13 of the Diamond Sutra the Buddha takes a series of five examples - transcendental wisdom, his own teaching, particles of dust, the world-system, and the thirty-two marks of a superman. Of each of these it is said that they are, that they are not, and that therefore they are. For instance, 'Because what was taught as particles of dust by the Tathagata, as no particles that was taught by the Tathagata. Therefore they are called 'particles of dust'. And this world-system the Tathagata has taught as no

world-system. Therefore is it called a world-system.' And so on for each.

This is followed by one of the elaborate hyperbolic metaphors used to emphasise the supreme importance of this teaching. And indeed the Venerable Subhuti is moved to tears thereby, and according to Mr. A. F. Price's translation from the Chinese, had 'an interior realisation' of its meaning. One might read this many times without understanding the tremendous importance attached to it, for neither translator draws attention to it or offers an explanation.

Nevertheless its supreme importance is evident enough when one understands that each of these contradictions is just an example of the formula 'It is: because it is not, therefore it is', or, as I give it, 'I (apparently) am: because I am not, therefore I am', or 'Because Reality is Non-reality, therefore it is Reality', 'Since Being is Non-being, therefore it is Being.'

The importance of this understanding of the precedence of the negative element to the positive, of the Void to the Plenum, of Non-being to Being, of I am not to I am, is sufficiently great to justify any degree of hyperbole - for it requires a reversal of our habitual way of regarding these matters, and a transvaluation of our established values according to which, as I have pointed out, we assume positive Reality or Being and then look for their negatives. That is, we imagine the Void as an emptiness in a pre-existing fullness, a nothing in an assumed Something, whereas we are urgently required to apprehend the ubiquitous pre-existence of Nothing out of which something may appear, or out of Non-manifestation manifestation.

In the following chapter, 14, Subhuti, full of enthusiasm, says, 'Through it cognition has been produced in me. Not have I ever before heard such a discourse on *Dharma*. Most wonderfully blest will be those who, when this sutra is being taught, will produce a true perception. And that which is true perception, *that indeed is no perception*. Therefore the Tathagata teaches true perception'. And again, in the same chapter, 'This perception of a being, Subhuti, that is just a non-perception. Those all-beings of whom the Tathagata has spoken, they are indeed no-beings.' And why? Because the Tathagata speaks *in accordance with reality*.' (Dr. Edward Conze, 'The Diamond Sutra'.)

'In accordance with reality' means in our vocabulary - since the term 'reality' is so variously understood - 'in accordance with whole-mind.'

It might not be too much to say that this, together with its counterpart the inexistence of any kind of self, is the *lietmotiv* of this sutra, capital in gnostic Buddhism, and constitutes perhaps its essential message. Subsequently indeed a considerably greater number of other 'dharmas' are treated according to the same formula, one of the most direct of which is, "Beings, beings', Subhuti, the Tathagata has taught that they are all no-beings. Therefore has he spoken of 'all beings'.' (Ch. 21)

* * *

It might be thought that what is meant is 'I am and I am not, and only in that sense I am', but the words of the Buddha are very definite and are reiterated *ad nauseam* in the Hindu manner. He *taught* that things and concepts (*dharmas*) are, then he *taught* that things and concepts (*dharmas*) are not, and that is *why* things and concepts (*dharmas*) are.

But Vedanta Advaita teaches 'I am', and the Buddhist doctrine of the Void teaches 'I am not'. The Buddha makes it clear, again and again, that it is *on account of this latter teaching* that in a sense I can be.

It therefore seems apparent that there are three stages on this path. The pilgrim learns to *understand* that he is, after having understood that as an I-concept he is not. Then, and only then, he comes to *know* that nevertheless he is not, for nothing is, not even he. And finally he *realises* that in consequence of that and in a sense inconceivable before, he is.

Hence the formula: I am: I am not, therefore I am.

* * *

The essential doctrine of the Diamond Sutra is that no sort or kind of self is to be considered as existing. Having disposed of the I-concept, the Buddha proceeds to dispose of the elements that serve as a basis for it, i.e. the five *skandhas*, and, finally, of all 'dharmas' from the supreme doctrine of enlightenment,

via all perceptions and the Four Holy Truths (the Heart Sutra here) down to his own physical body.

In short, as Hui Neng realised so early in life, nothing at all exists, which is the Void. But the Buddha always adds that therefore everything exists in some manner. The translations are unsatisfactory here, for some say 'are said to exist' or 'are called such and such', whereas others are less evasive. One may suspect that none quite gives the sense.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 28

Néant

The current theories to the effect that the Void does not in fact mean what it says, that it is not emptiness, is not nothing but is only emptiness *of* something, imply that it *is* something, and moreover something in something.

Surely this is shirking the truth: it is everything we think we know, therefore it must be nothing we know. It is Nothing, therefore everything is. *Were it anything there could not be anything.* It is precisely because it is Nothing that there can be anything. Either one sees this or one does not: it is evident, but it cannot be proved.

'Form is emptiness', says the Heart Sutra (the Heart of the Prajna-paramita), 'and emptiness is form'. Then it explains: 'Emptiness is *nothing but* form, and form is *nothing but* emptiness.' Finally it completes the definition by adding: 'Apart from emptiness there is no form, and apart from form there is no emptiness.' In other words: 'Apart from nothing there is no anything, and apart from anything there is no nothing.' Or again, 'Apart from our phenomenal world there is no Void, and apart from the Void there is no phenomenal world.'

The Void then is nothing, absolutely nothing - and Nothing is absolutely everything. For both exist only in mind.

All talk about the Void being this and that, not meaning that and the other, is not only baulking the issue - it is shutting oneself off from the truth. It is necessary to realise that the Void means exactly Nothing, and that exactly Nothing is all that there is. And that that is the reason why anything can appear to be. Otherwise one has the whole situation the wrong way round, for one continues to think that reality is positive, something positively existing, of which the negative is inconceivable. *But reality itself is negative*, and its positive is just appearance, and both are concepts of the split or *samsaric* mind. In whole-mind reality is neither positive nor negative - *for there is nothing of the kind*. Reality simply IS NOT.

This seems to be the Essential Doctrine of the Prajna-paramita, revealing the illusion which constitutes the bondage of *Samsara*, the barrier which prevents mind from knowing itself as no-mind, pure negativity or the absolute unconscious.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 29

The Photographic Image Also Is Negative

The Void only appears to be Emptiness or Nothing when it is regarded as the opposite of Something or Everything. Or it is only when Non-being is seen as the counterpart of Being that it appears as Nothing.

But when Something or Everything is seen as the counterpart of Nothing - then Nothing becomes Everything, and Non-being can be seen as Being.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 30

Discrimination

'When discrimination is not discriminating and yet discriminating, we have perfect enlightenment.' (Suzuki, 'Essentials of Buddhism', p. 22). This seems to mean: when the kind of discrimination in question is not a discriminating (does not discriminate or is not seen as discriminating) and yet discriminates in some sense, we have perfect enlightenment, i.e. either perfect enlightenment is necessary in order to do that, or when we are able to do that we experience perfect enlightenment. But what is the meaning of this?

Dr. Suzuki speaks on the next page of the 'pure undefiled spiritual world of non-discrimination, while the defiling world is that of thought and discrimination'. We may then re-define the statement as follows: 'When discrimination, based on rational thinking, is seen to be really non-discriminating, i.e. not a discriminating at all *in reality*, it is then seen to be nevertheless what we know as discriminating, but of a kind only recognisable as such by those who have perfect enlightenment, i.e. who have seen that rational thinking, in the spiritual world of reality, is not discrimination at all.'

In our own jargon: what our two eyes see and split-mind knows as rational discrimination, our third eye sees and whole-mind knows undiscriminated as one whole, but when thereafter we see it - let us say with all three eyes - we perceive the discrimination that potentially exists in not discriminating, in perceiving that one whole wherein there is no place for discrimination when seen by the intuitional eye. The discriminating then effected by our normal two eyes and split-mind is of another character, one which we may provisionally describe as 'potential'.

More precisely, in whole-mind the discrimination of split-mind is automatically merged in not discriminating, although

potential discriminating is inherent therein, so that in the enlightened the two points of view can be seen, the discrimination of split-mind tempered by the not discriminating vision of whole-mind.

(*Note:* I have adhered throughout to the distribution of the terms 'discrimination' and 'discriminating' as used by Dr. Suzuki.)

In this, unusually, a Zen master speaks of discriminating - which is that which occurs in the mind, instead of that which is discriminated - which is the apparent object of that process. Habitually we are asked to see two discriminated objects as one, two 'opposites' or complementaries united in what is termed 'self-identity'. But there are no such objects, as they well know, outside consciousness, and the functioning of split-mind whose *modus operandi* lies in dualistic alternation in a time-sequence, is not capable of having two thoughts simultaneously. The requirement of the masters only appears to be feasible when it is replaced in the mind wherein it occurs, and therein, as here, we can see at least how it may be.

This constitutes a key-example of the Buddha's formula, quoted from the Diamond Sutra, for the term 'discriminating' covers all forms of judging, and the innumerable qualities and things judged by us are not considered, but the *mental process* only - which is all that can be said to occur or to have any degree of reality.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 31

A.B.C. 1 : *The Culprit*

All the evil in the world, and all the unhappiness, comes from the I-concept.

There are two methods of dealing with it: the dualistic approach, by seeking to discipline, purify, or otherwise

ameliorate this supposed self which suffers and does ill, that is working by means of that which is itself the cause; and the non-dualist method, by disposing of it, by eradicating the cause, by realising that it is only a concept and is not I at all.

Only the second method can be completely efficacious, because it alone is radical and permanent. If it can be realised that the subject is not the I-concept, that the I-concept is not the subject, its power - for evil as for suffering - must automatically cease to be effective.

* * *

We do not possess an
'ego',
We are possessed by the
idea of one.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 32

A.B.C. 2: Transvaluation of Values

We think of insides as being the insides of outsides - for it is only outsides that we know, and even what we speak of as insides are themselves only outsides within other outsides.

If we understood, we should see things the other way round, for the within is nearer reality than the without. Everything we know should be the without of a *within*, the external *appearance* of something real and unseen within, 'behind' or 'beneath' it.

This is an aspect of the realisation that negative, not positive, is fundamental.

Moreover we think of ourselves as outsides and 'inside' is to us either an organ (itself another outside) or something mental.

There we approach the truth - but like a moth trying to light on a candle-flame.

If we firmly transvalued our values and thought of our selves as withins, and *only* as withins - withouts being merely symbols thereof - we should be at least on the road that leads in the direction of understanding.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 33

A.B.C. 3: The Buddha's Formula in Relative Reality

It may be possible to understand the Buddha's formula more readily by means of an example based on phenomenal existence.

Take any object - say a jug - and let it represent, be a symbol for, reality. If you then photograph it you have a negative representation of it in two dimensions, composed merely of light and shade. The positive reproduction of that symbol reverses the light and shade, and reveals an image which we can recognise as that of what we know as a jug. An animal, unable to form concepts, cannot normally recognise the object, but sees only light and shade.

That, in fact, is the Buddha's formula, in reverse. The positive image is that which appears to be in phenomenal existence. The negative image is the background of that, its relative reality from which it derives, that which precedes it and without which it cannot be. But both are just two-dimensional images composed of light and shade, quite illusory, unrecognisable except by beings who use concepts - just representations of the jug-reality whose existence is in a further dimension.

So you have the formula exactly: it is (as an appearance); it is not (is a negative): therefore that which is represented (and is real) alone is.

Note 1: We notice in passing that this example reveals clearly the three degrees of perception available to man: perception of 'reality', known only to the awakened; perception of 'relative reality', the objective world known to us; perception of images and symbols by means of conceptualisation. The first is real; the second is a representation of the real; the third is imaginary. The Buddha's formula treats of the two first forms of perception; our example is applied to the two latter.

Note 2: The photographic apparatus represents the sensorial apparatus by means of which we interpret, or create, the apparent world which surrounds us.

ASK THE AWAKENED : 34

The Buddha, Original, or Self Nature

This 'real nature' with whose revelation the Ch'an Masters are primarily concerned, or the Atman-'I' of the Vedantists, is not the far-off, unreachable will-o'-the-wisp we are apt to imagine, but just the within of which we know the without. It is just the other side of the medal, and it lies wherever our senses and our intellect cease to function.

At that point it is to be found, and that 'point' is in every direction, so that wherever we turn we cannot avoid it. Nor, of course, is it a long way off. It is not 'off' at all: it is within, here and now, and where we are before we start to look for it. We don't have to look for it, nor could we ever see it by looking. By the absence of looking, listening, touching, tasting, smelling, and thinking we realise that we are it. For it is the unmanifest of that which we see, hear, feel, taste, smell, and think of as manifest. It is the negative of everything that is positive to us, the reality of every illusion - and every sensory

and conceptual experience is an illusion. I have only to cease to be in order to become that which an I is, to realise that I am not in order to be That I Am.

Where our sensory and intellectual experience ceases, where we can no longer know anything by their means, there lies what to them can only be Nothing or the Void - that is our 'real nature', that is pure consciousness which is all that is, and it is just that.

Put in another manner, it is just the underside of the surfaces which are all that we are aware of anywhere or in anything, the within of the without which surrounds us on all sides, the back of the front. It is the Unmanifest from within which everything manifests, the Not-I which is all the I that is.

* * * * *