

Noumena: Consciousness without an Object

The following article assimilates and incorporates the teachings of true teachers I have had the honor to study with, personal experiences of this body/mind and books I have read. This discourse is nothing more than an exercise in for this body/mind to sit and absorb the wisdom imparted to it.

With deep respect and honor to James Swartz and Francis Lucile who have taken the time and effort to nurture me in the application of knowledge to uncover the natural state. This article bows to both of them; it borrows heavily from their brilliant work. Being self-realized does not qualify one to teach; both Francis and James are brilliant teachers. Please visit their websites, or better yet, track them down and visit with them:

Just who are we?

That which we are is consciousness. Sometimes referred to as awareness, presence, the natural state, the unconditioned mind, the Self or the unborn, consciousness is simply that which perceives the words on this page, that which hears the spoken word, that which perceives, right now, the “world”, the “body” and the “mind”.

We have a tendency to complicate this issue. We tend to believe that “awareness” is something mysterious, something that must be obtained. Somehow, we have decided that consciousness is something that must be sought through a difficult path of inquiry and practice. But, this is simply not true.

Consciousness is directly under our noses. It allows us to perceive everything that is, allows us to experience all of the objects of awareness.

Are you conscious? Of course you are. So, now you have it: you are consciousness. Your awareness of being conscious is what we refer to when we talk of “consciousness becoming aware of itself”. Pretty simple and, as it turns out, pretty profound.

World, Body, Mind

What are these objects that we perceive? And who is it that perceives them? Who is the subject and who is the object? This is where the hunt for truth and happiness begins. This is the question that uncovers who we actually are.

These objects are phenomena, a word that needs definition. Phenomenon is an appearance, an anomaly, or simply put, any occurrence that is observable.

As we extrovert our attention using our bodily senses, we group objects we observe as “the world.”

When our sensations are turned inward onto the body, we group these perceptions as “the body”.

When we direct our attention to our thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, we place these perceptions into a basket we refer to as ‘the mind.’

The Space between the Objects

In between the objects is space, a poor term at best for noumenon, something that exists in the “gaps” between them, “the thing in itself”, as Kant said. This awareness, this space, this presence endures at all times; this distinguishes it from the object itself, which appears and dissolves over time. It is the essence of our natural state; internally, we refer to it as consciousness. It is always present. We later discover, that externally, it is reality.

So life turns out to be a dual modality of sensations: externally perceived as the “world” on one level through the physical senses, while simultaneously, deeply understood as consciousnesses, awareness, internally.

As our investigation deepens, we come to question whether our view of consciousness as a limited and ‘internal’ is valid.

This conflict between what we sense through our bodily senses, that we are separate and limited, and what we intuit in our internal experience, that we are limitless and infinite, creates a “spiritual dissonance”, which motivates our deepest behavior in life. It drives us to discover exactly who we are, and through this investigation, to discover the peace, happiness and freedom that we naturally are. The best way to describe this discovery is consciousness knowing itself.

It is only thru the mind that we know objects; consciousness has no such limitation in knowing itself. It exists beyond space, time and form; thus, it can not be shaped or affected by them.

In our minds, content constantly changes. We remain conscious thru all of these changes. Consciousness remains changeless; the proof is that we experience change within consciousness. As Francis Lucille points out: “Consciousness of change is evidence of the changelessness of consciousness.”

This is good news. For, upon investigation, we discover that perhaps only one thing can be known for sure: that is, that we definitely exist. We are aware of objects in time and space. We know that all objects have a beginning and an end. For something to be perceived, there must be a subject and an object. What we are is the subject; all else must, by definition, be objects, whether material or not. If we observe them, they cannot be us.

The Choice of Freedom

As the witness, as consciousness, we have the ultimate choice: we choose whether to identify with that which appears to us, or not. This includes the most basic choice of identification with the body/mind itself. Only consciousness has the choice to be limited as a body/mind or to remain limitless.

Only consciousness has freedom. If we take our stand as being limited, and assert the freedom to be unlimited consciousness, the conclusion must be that, in our natural state, we are limited to begin with. Thus, to experience and remain universal, to remain limitless, would require continual effort, as limitless consciousness would, by definition, be artificial and require effort to maintain.

This is not the case. Our natural state is, in fact, our limitlessness, and thus, we are empowered to let go of our beliefs in limitation at any moment. It requires absolutely no effort.

We come to realize this through knowledge and direct experience. Over time, our direct experience, sometimes referred to as Samadhi or glimpses of limitlessness deepens and ripens as the body/mind re-aligns itself with the newly discovered reality. Problems dissolve as our understanding conforms to the Truth. Suffering reflects nothing more than the persistence of old habits and conditioning. We obtain the satisfaction of living the realization of what we truly are.

Grace

“Grace is that which does not come from an object.”

-Francis Lucille

Having discovered that, as the subject, all that we perceive must be objects, thru a process of elimination, ultimately, we discover our true nature. To one unaware of their true nature, nothing is grace; to one on the path of self-discovery, some appearances are grace.

Ultimately, all is one; with this discovery, the truth unfolds: all is grace, our teacher.

It is only our habitual beliefs, conditioning and understandings that block us from seeing clearly; over time, we come to a state of ‘not knowing’, where we allow all things to arise and resolve in the moment. Life becomes the teacher.

When we open up to the possibility that every situation in our life is an opportunity for grace, then grace appears.

Vasanas: The Thoughts

In this ‘not knowing’ presence, all things appear, even our thoughts. Since we can observe the thoughts that

arise within us, they are not 'us'. They are appearances, much like everything else. Thoughts come and go, while we remain conscious of them before, during and after their occurrence. As the 'subject', watching thoughts, 'objects', we learn they are not what we are.

Watching these thoughts closely, realizing they are not ours, we try this test: we attempt to predict our next thought. Of course, we can not. At very best, we can simultaneously announce the thought as it occurs; we are not the creator of the thoughts that appear to us.

This is a huge discovery that strips away layers of illusion that keep us married to Maya. For, if we are not the creator of our thoughts, then, we are not the doer of our deeds, a profound conclusion illuminating the truth within the dream, which we call the waking state.

The Ramana Question: Who am I?

And, to whom do these thoughts arise? This inquiry slowly erodes ego, as it is discovered that there is no locus to which the thoughts appear, nothing which substantively constitutes a self. The inquiry frustrates the inquirer by design, forcing the attention to the only thing that remains outside of phenomena, noumena. Clearly seeing that the subject does not create the thoughts and thus, does not do the deeds, coupled with the revelation that the location of the self identity is nowhere to be found, the obvious conclusion arises: as a limited body/mind, 'nobody is home.'

The mind is a tethered, limited process, incapable of discerning limitless Self. This occurs because mind is a subset of consciousness, not the other way around. It cannot understand that from which it was born, being only a part of the whole. The mind has no direct access to consciousness.

The mind stops looking for its true nature only when it realizes that it is beyond its capacity to know. This understanding does not imply that conscious awareness is in the jail of body/mind. Nothing could be further from the Truth. That we are limitless, action less awareness is our core nature, our natural state. When we discover that it is also what we refer to as love and happiness, our interest becomes very keen.

This does not mean that knowledge is unnecessary or undesirable in the pursuit of self-realization. It is a common misconception to believe that the mind must be avoided in the uncovering of Self. In fact, it is knowledge that places us at the foot of Atman. It permits Grace to push us over.

Thus, mind, through knowledge, can only bring us to the edge of the precipice. There, consciousness, through grace, permits the final step.

Thoughts of Separation

The mother of all thoughts is belief in separation, of being an individual, and thus, being a limited self. This thought, this core belief, has many subservient appendages to which we become slaves: the need for approval, security and control all emerge from this.

When this belief, which is nothing more than a thought with 'me' attached to it, consumes us, it drives our day-to-day lives.

In fact, this belief in separation appears like all of our other thoughts within consciousness., This thought, like all others, evaporates over time to be replaced by other appearances.

Thus, all thoughts and bodily sensations and, in fact, all objects, are all one with consciousness.

In Truth, there is never duality. Duality is the re-writing of history by the limited mind, the interpretation of experience after the fact.

This is proven through the process of self observation.

Using the 'subject'/'object' inquiry, we focus on the belief that I am this, I am not that. As the witnessing consciousness, we investigate our surroundings. Quickly, we determine, for instance, that we are not those things, which we behold, we are not the chair witnessed. The chair is a perceived object.

Turning our attention to our bodies, we ask ourselves, "Which are we: consciousness witnessing or the body

which it perceives? Clearly, using the dual nature of subject/object rationale, we are not our bodies. We observe the body and thus, cannot be it.

By extending the inquiry, the same conclusion is reached regarding our thoughts and bodily sensations, immaterial objects. Thoughts, beliefs, feelings, memories and bodily sensations are witnessed by the 'subject', us, and thus, cannot be us.

We are forced to conclude that what we are, then, is not attached to this body/mind mechanism we have formerly identified with.

Even this small discovery begins to fuel a sense of freedom in us.

This witnessing presence, consciousness, the subject in our inquiry, no longer attached to the body/mind, can now be understood as being impersonal. Body/mind seems personal and thus, limited. Since consciousness is not the body/mind, it is not subject to these limitations; it is not in any way an object.

This allows the inquirer to consider that his absolute nature as consciousness is universal and impersonal. There is no longer any valid reason to limit consciousness, the ever-present witness. This allowing for an unlimited, universal and impersonal view of Self, paves the way for the experience of a glimpse, of true nature as naked reality. Freedom is revealed.

There is absolutely no evidence that consciousness is contained within the body. There are no limits or boundaries to consciousness. You can check this out.

Armed with this conclusion, it is now possible to revisit the world of objects that create the illusion of separate self. Seeing that consciousness, awareness, presence, is universal and impersonal, it is realized that all objects arise, exist and dissolve within it.

In fact, this could only be the case if all objects were actually of 'it', of consciousness, awareness, presence. All objects are made from consciousness, that which you are at your very core. Our experience is the experience of the universe; our substance is the substance of the universe. Consciousness is the substance of the universe and everything that arises from within it, beings and all other objects, is made of this substance.

There is no more separation, no more subject/object, this/that, not even witness and witnessed. There is only one. Duality is merely used as an investigative technique to illumine the nature of that which we are thru elimination of that which we apparently are not. Thus, we grant validity for the moment to that which nourishes the illusion of separation. In the final inquiry, we use it to destroy the dualism that got us there and liberate ourselves from its power.

Glimpses, Fleeting Samadhi

Bliss can be defined as consciousness becoming aware of itself. In its purest form, it is the remembrance of that which we are at our very core, and the sense of relief that permits. Everyone can and does have these experiences; the depth and intensity of habit and conditioning obscure the uninterrupted experience of it.

The question, "What am I?" points us in the direction of our fundamental nature, which is bliss. Bliss, the happiness of consciousness knowing itself is sometimes referred to as, "The Perfume of Silence." Focusing on noumena, consciousness without an object has the same effect. For that matter, a moment of natural beauty, which leaves us breathless, and thus, suspends our thinking, can bring on the temporary experience of profound bliss, as consciousness experiences itself.

In fact, the happiness we mistakenly take as the result of acquiring objects of our desire does not emanate from the object itself. It occurs within the seeker simply from the cessation of desire for the object; in the moments following its acquisition, the absence of desire allows the bliss that already exists to shine through. How could an object contain the bliss we desire from it?

Even after the most powerful of Samadhis, residual habits, behaviors, contractions return, until they are finally extinguished through knowledge acquired as to the fundamental nature of reality. Abidance in our true nature is nothing more than the final detachment from objects, as the clouds, which cover reality, evaporate like the morning mist under the warmth of the sun.

A clear mind, free of any belief or feeling system supporting the idea of a personal identity, is what is necessary. When objects arise in experience, they appear in you as you. There is no notion of a person being there.

You are no longer enslaved to your belief that consciousness resides in the body, because there is nothing of identified you left in the body to experience anything. Experiences arise and pass right through you. You are everywhere and everything is in you. Life simply pours thru the space that the identified you used to occupy.

This is the experience of the witness becoming the witnessed. I am that. There is no difference between you and that which arises within what is you.

Thoughts may still arise, but they are witnessed and not engaged. No fear, no problems attach to them.

Consciousness precedes identity. Identity arises within it as does everything else. The experience of diversity must be preceded by consciousness. In other words, there can be no diversity without consciousness but there can be consciousness without diversity.

The beauty is that our everyday consciousness, the same consciousness that we take for granted as being so ordinary, is the same consciousness that divinely lives all of our lives. There is no separate divine consciousness at work. All things come and go, live and die, within the consciousness that is always present.

Timeless Being

There is no time. It is a fiction supported by memory.

Consider timelessness through the example of a night time dream. In a dream, a long time can elapse, for the sake of argument, let's say 6 months. Upon awakening it is realized that only a few moments have passed. This illustrates the illusory aspect of time, as, when we wake up, we see that the time passing in the dream was fictional.

Now, assume that the few moments that passed in the waking state are within consciousness, presence, and assume that the 6 months of the dream are any period in time and space of the waking state. Every time we go back to consciousness we enter timelessness. It creates the illusion of time while existing outside of time. Just as the dream state is different than the waking state, consciousness is a place from which the apparent movement of time can be noticed. Consciousness does not itself move in time.

In the night dream, there is only one mind involved, the mind of the dreamer. Though I interact with many characters within the night dream, I have access to only one mind.

The waking state dream is a different animal in that, it is a multi minded dream. As consciousness, we have access to all minds at any given time, but, we choose to disregard all but one of them in the interest of completely enjoying the experience of this mind. And, actually, this is exactly what happens in the night dream:

In the night dream, we create all of the characters and events but experience them only thru one character. Events we did not expect surprise us, even though we, as the dreamer, created them. We become excited and afraid because we have forgotten that we actually created them!

The spiritual value of the night dream state is that it illustrates to us how the waking dream state operates with illusion. At some point we realize that we are the creator (Brahma), sustainer (Vishnu) and the destroyer (Shiva) Of all objects in consciousness. Just as the characters and objects of the night dream seem real to us when under the spell of sleep, the same illusion holds true under the power of Maya, even when we realize that we are creating it all along.

It could be said that the night dream is powered by mind and Maya creates the waking dream state. In a playful manner, consciousness makes it utterly real. This world, which seems to be real, is a well-orchestrated dream.

The day waking dream has the appearance of consistency from day to day. This is because gross matter vibrates at a much lower frequency than that which prevails at the level of mind, the subtle state. This gives the appearance of durability.

What the mind serves up are images designed to entertain consciousness. The mind never sees 'the thing in itself'. The 'thing in itself' has no shape, no form, no color and no properties. This is not to deny it's relative reality, but to put things in proper perspective. Science has an abundance of evidence to support this conclusion.

Since 'the thing in itself', the reality of all things, has the same absence of properties that consciousness has, it is not a quantum leap to conclude they are the same.

We don't wake up from the waking dream simply because, when invited, we don't really want to. This dream is very compelling.

There is a common misunderstanding that when 'one wakes up' from the waking state dream, that the dream goes away and, in its place, a better one emerges. In actuality, the dream simply continues as it did before; Maya does not change. The difference is that we now know Maya as Maya and that the body/mind is involved. We enter a new phase of life: it is similar to lucid dreaming. The dream does not go away. The only thing that changes is our recognition of the illusion, that what we experience is not the ultimate reality of what we are.

This allows us to become playful and approach life as a celebration. We live in the timeless moment and the contentment of our aloneness, permitting the mind to chatter on since we are no longer married to it.

The Nonsense of Others

Consciousness chooses to enjoy life through all body/minds. It doesn't create just human body/minds, it creates the whole shooting match: all of the animals, insects, plants, trees, the earth, mountains, the sea and so forth. It's the really big game.

Mind does not invite consciousness to visit. This is the fallacy of 'enlightenment.' As Francis Lucille says, "There will never be an enlightened human being."

The mind only receives an invitation to the party from consciousness: thus, grace. So, invoking God by "being open to yourself" is nothing more than a plea to the consciousness that you already are.

Consciousness knows Itself

Consciousness knows itself prior to body/mind. Only then, does consciousness know objects. First, there is self-realization, the knowing that there is no one other than Self. It is folly to think that a body/mind must create a connection with consciousness; it would mean that consciousness was personal, separate and dies with the body/mind. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Consciousness knows itself. It is the same consciousness that created the entire universe and perceives the words written on this page, right here, right now.

Synchronicity

The purpose of all of life's events is to point us towards the Truth of what we are and to celebrate that absolute truth. As long as the residual programming, conditioning and habits continue to encourage the view of being a separate entity, an individual person, consciousness will dish up a never ending series of lessons, all designed to give us pause and point us back in the direction of truth. The wise man takes note when he confronts contraction, suffering and adversity. They are portals prodding us towards Truth. Perhaps the greatest symbol of this is Christ on the cross.

When we begin to recognize what we are, we are fortunate and life becomes a celebration with confirmations appearing at every turn. Life becomes an act of love, of humble service and gratitude with no expectation of return. Acts become an offering of thanks to the beauty and perfection of the manifestation.

The 'I' Thought

The desire to understand the 'I' thought never arises from ego; to deny this basic motivation is to deny life itself. It is seeking for the sake of itself. This one desire begs to be honored to the exclusion of all others. In

reality, all of our desires and fears are born of this fundamental motivation. It is only the illusion that what we seek can be found outside of ourselves that causes us misery.

Truth and Relief

Many do not approach Truth consistently; part of the time they seek Truth and the rest of the time they seek relief. These desires are diametrically opposed to one another and lead in opposite directions.

As Francis Lucille succinctly puts it, "When it comes to seeking the Truth, we are like the donkey; the stick and carrot both work. When we feel miserable, it is because we are doing something wrong. And if we feel happy, it is because we are doing something right."

Blank Mind; Empty Mind

This 'I' thought is outside of mind. In the absence of any perceptions, there is only the natural state of unconditioned consciousness. The mind has no access to anything other than objective reality. This is the nature of mind. It perceives only through the function of duality; thus, that which lies beyond it is outside of its grasp. The most that mind can offer is a blank mind, in which there is absence of thoughts.

This can be compared to a painting hanging on the wall. Remove the painting and there is a blank space where the painting formerly sat. This is not what is meant by an empty mind; the empty mind could be called the 'space behind the space behind the picture.'

An empty mind is a moment out of time, an experience of no duration, full of bliss. This place is directly behind the mind. It is the glue that holds the entire picture together, without which nothing could possibly exist. It is consciousness without an object.

The World and its Objects

The world can be divided into three subsets: the gross world is filled with external objects; the subtle world of mind with thoughts, feelings, memories, ideas, beliefs, and images; the third, consciousness.

External objects ultimately, are subsumed into the mental world, and the mental world is subsumed into consciousness. There are thus, two dissolutions. First, the gross is discovered to be subtle, made of mind, and then, the mind itself is discovered to be of consciousness.

The gross world is deployed in four dimensions, the three dimensions of space and the fourth dimension of time. When the gross world collapses into mind, there only remains time. When the subtle collapses into consciousness, the last dimension of time collapses into consciousness. The opposite occurs in creation.

When you acknowledge the possibility that everything is mind, you enter a world in which there is a deep connection between the thoughts and the events they refer to. There can be intimations of that which is going to happen.

At this level, in which we hold that there is no difference between mind and matter, the relevant law is that of Karma, the law of cause and effect. Events occur obediently with those laws; at a certain level, there is some predictability as to outcome. But, when we acknowledge that everything is consciousness, this is replaced only by awe and surprise. Nothing is predictable anymore as there are no laws.

So, in the natural gross world, evolution applies. In the subtle world, karmic law applies. But, as consciousness, only the law of love applies.

To the person who sees the world as merely a reflection of happenings of the mental world, there might be fear of holding a certain thought as it might manifest something unwanted in his life. And, this fear would be well grounded, as his attachment to thought would bring about the results of his fears.

But, to the sage, it is an entirely different matter. Not bound by his thoughts, unattached, the only rule is that of love. If the thoughts come from love, they will bring only love, they will manifest only love. How could it be any different?

The Garden of Eden

The source of all suffering is born of the belief in separation; the way out is to comprehend that we are not. Consider that in which this idea of separation emerges.

Here, the story of Adam and Eve is helpful. Tempted by the snake (desire), Adam is convinced to eat the fruit of the tree knowledge, of mind. This act imbues him with the knowledge of good and evil, right and wrong, and all of the other opposites. Through this simple act of defiance, Adam and Eve fall from grace. Dispassion and equanimity is lost. Separation is born and Paradise is lost. Desire and fear manifest.

The good news is that nothing says we cannot spit out the poison; it is our choice to return to our natural state. To do so, we return to no-body and live in a state of not knowing. Then the fragrance can return.

Releasing ourselves from intention is the key. Everything is absorbed in the moment and forgotten, the poetry of consciousness designed to be consumed in the now. No rules, no dogma, no predictions or demands.

Once having experienced freedom from the burden of our goals and concepts, there is no more desire to force reality to conform to our preconceived notions by squeezing out the blissful spontaneity of life no matter how well thought out our beliefs might seem to be. Discarding words and concepts, we return to innocence, playing as children in the gift of life.

The Seer and the Seen Drig Drishya Viveka

The Drig Drishya, written by Adi Shankara, is the Vedantic text inquiring into the nature of the 'seer' and 'the seen', the subject/object inquiry previously discussed and of the utmost importance in deciphering the nature of Self as consciousness in Vedanta philosophy. A short 64 short verses, the Drig Drishya establishes first that the Self is not an object by any means, and then establishes that all people and, in fact, the world in it's entirety is that which you are.

Having been liberated from the bondage of objectivity, the student discovers a new dimension, a territory the mind does not know. In fact, attempting to see the seer thru the mind is exactly that which prevents the seer from uncovering itself. In actuality, the seer is beyond both time and space.

The seer is experienced as the 'perfume of silence', the fragrance of peace and happiness, no-space and release from burden. This is the unique trademark of Samadhi, the experience of consciousness knowing itself. Next to it, all happiness derived from external objects appears to be nothing more than a poor photocopy of the real thing.

Conversely, when peace, happiness and love are truly experienced in life, the cause is inevitably consciousness experiencing itself. When order and harmony are experienced in the world of objects, it triggers in us the experience of it's source, oneness, from behind the veil of ignorance. Bow and gives thanks, but never forget that it is not the object from which the happiness emerges, it is merely a reflection of your natural state.

Starting with the observation that the world is imperfect, as the understanding of oneness unfolds spiritually in us, we come to realize God in people, places and objects of all sorts. The process starts simply by becoming receptive to the possibility that God is everywhere. The practice is simply to attempt to see God at every turn, every moment, every place.

It is a major distortion to view the waking state dream as real. The truth is that the seer is the seen, that Brahman is Atman. Brahman is that which underlies all of phenomena and is the same as Atman, the Self, consciousness of the jiva, that which we refer to as 'I'.

The awakening begins with the understanding that our beliefs are nothing more than that: a basket of beliefs. We see our subsequent liberation from them but, to go beyond this, we are delivered by grace. Belief in separation rejects the invitation of grace.

Resting through Understanding

There is a point when the mind's concepts must be abandoned. Having no affinity for peace and happiness, the mind must bow to that which is, abiding in awareness, not knowing. It cannot know the joy, which lies outside of it. The mind, looking for rest, and armed with knowledge, higher reasoning, abdicates its seat of control to the source of all, oneness, Atman.

All effort is ignorance. The mind cannot bully its way to rest. It only comes to rest through the process of understanding. The heart of the understanding is that the mind cannot have a clear picture of Truth. In fact, all seeking perpetuates the existence of the ego, and is a bad habit. It is just this conditioning, this habitual behavior that blocks us from self realization.

Once realized, the mind surrenders and rests in peace. Attempting to 'crush' the mind is fruitless; it must accomplish this naturally through understanding. In this way, we use the mind to achieve the understanding that permits its subservience.

The understanding is not the end in itself. It is the beginning. It is probable that old, binding vasanas, behavioral patterns, will continue to residually agitate, blocking the sun, that which we are. In time, belief systems and desires release as the understanding takes hold.

We meet life where life meets us, but, we are only acting, for we never leave that which we are. Circumstances and meditation teach us what to say and do in the moment. Allowing yourself to be led, the appropriate behavior and words arise, which have a liberating effect on those around you.

Thoughts are all centered around the illusionary concept of the individual 'me'. As long as this notion exists, it perpetuates samsara, the merry go round of thoughts. Concurrently, it will also attempt to stop the merry go round of thoughts.

When this happens, we simply investigate this "me" belief. Who or what is this me entity, this allegedly separate person? Even when we have a fundamental understanding that there is no "me", we return to it over and over again, observing what happens to these thoughts that repeatedly arise in the mind.

Asking, "What is this me?" stops the mind in its tracks, and permits meditation to occur. We observe the physical sensations and thoughts masquerading as the pseudo "me" and see them as the objects they are. In this respect, we treat bodily sensations the same as we treat thoughts, surrendering them to the source from which they have arisen.

We discover emasculated involved thoughts appear out of habit. These thoughts are surrendered back into the void from which they arise by shifting our focus upstream towards the Self, the space from which they appear. When we are no longer attached to them by desire, we no longer care if they arise or not. This is freedom. We have cut off the fuel that feeds them simply by observing rather than acting on them. Slowly, they resolve, becoming part of the landscape and abidance occurs. Eventually, the shift occurs and we stabilize. "Benevolent indifference" is the term Francis Lucille uses to explain this attitude.

We have allowed these physical sensations and thoughts to parade as the pseudo "me" simply because we enjoyed them. Realizing this, we are free to choose whether to participate in them, or remain in beingness.

We are quite fond of some of these sensations and thoughts. As thoughts, they localize in the forehead; as feelings, they localize in the chest. Both give rise to the sense of pseudo self. The true center is not localized; it is consciousness. This is obvious because thoughts and sensations are an appearance in that which I am.

The true center only gives; it is not that which grasps. This is the difference between true love and the pseudo love of mind. As Francis Lucille succinctly puts it, "True love wants nothing for itself."

Bhakti: The Love of Truth

Love of Truth is the cornerstone, the ground from which we evolve. When questions regarding Truth constantly arise, we are at the feet of knowledge. This love, this hunger for Truth has great transformative power. The love of God opens us to everything, relaxes us and allows us to settle in our true nature. The fruit of our love is the end of suffering and the commencement of celebration.

When that which we love, the Truth, consciousness, is seen to be intimate but not private, it allows us to view everyone and everything as a reflection of it and love pours outward. Magic occurs as we approach others this way; as awareness shares itself, a gentle, friendly fragrance is experienced.

Identification with Objects

Clearly, identification with objects cannot occur from unity. There must be duality for such a phenomena to exist; thus, the core belief in separation must exist for the individual to exist and for attachment to objects to occur. They are two sides of the same coin. Desires and attachments are the flagship of separation.

Thus, the core belief inhibiting reality from being evident is separation. Reality can only be seen by reality. This phenomenon of consciousness identifying with the body/mind, an object, is the root misidentification.

Additionally, we have been taught that consciousness is personal and separate; conditioning tells us that there are as many different personal consciousness' as there are living entities. But, experience shows us that all objects have borders and limits. Consciousness does not.

The Key Indicators of Abidance

Difficult situations do not evaporate for the self-realized. There is simply the absence of suffering. Psychological problems are transformed into contentment, peace and happiness. They can be forgotten or obscured but never destroyed. A desire may trigger forgetfulness momentarily, but, those established in the peace of awareness are released from negative emotions.

This is the great gift of self-realization.