Six

You are
Quiet
Compassionate
Space
in which
the life
that you think of
as 'yourself'
unfolds.
"One instant is eternity; 
eternity is the now. 
When you see through this one instant 
you see through the one who sees."
- Wu Men

The basic misunderstanding, the essential 'endarken-
ment,' is the belief in discreet individuals existing
as separate entities and as the originators, thinkers, or
doers of any thoughts, actions, or experiences. Including,
of course, the presumed individual thinking this.

"It is not so very difficult to understand, at least
intellectually, that this universe is a dream, but it
is almost impossible to accept that the one who is
supposed to understand this is himself part of the
dream. This belief in oneself is the only real obstruc-
tion to the happening of apperception." (Ramesh)

This belief in separate individuals, including the indi-
vidual which one calls one's self, is part of the larger illusion
of space-time. All there is is Consciousness, Presence,
Noumenon. What is perceived as the manifestation, phenomenon, the totality of space-time, is an appearance in Consciousness and not other than it.

It is not terribly difficult or unusual for seekers, after some investigation, to be able to intellectually comprehend the illusory nature of the individual and of separation. Both are functions of the idea of space: it is in space that things, including individuals, appear to be distinct and separate from each other. While it is indeed another matter to include one’s own ‘self’ in this, nevertheless the basic idea can be grasped. After all, the central idea that “all is One” is present in almost all the world religions and spiritual traditions and is one which any spiritual seeker will have been exposed to for some time.

As I have said, the idea that “we are One” is self-contradictory and clouded in fuzzy thinking. But again, nevertheless the basic principle can be understood: the perception of boundaries which creates separation in space into distinct individual entities is illusion; in truth, only Oneness is. When this is spoken of in a group of seekers, there can be seen a general nodding of heads.

Of course this presents its own dilemma: while this principle of ‘spatial Oneness,’ the illusory nature of the separation of all things in space, is in some circles so familiar as to be a truism, it is clearly not truly and fully understood. True understanding of this would bring the end to all questions, suffering and seeking.

When one moves on to the concept of the illusory nature of time, and begins to talk of ‘temporal Oneness’ there is not this familiarity, and even intellectual comprehension
is much harder to come by. Phrases like “there is no such thing as time,” or “there is no past or future, only now” can be repeated easily, but any understanding as to what this means is less common. The bookstores are full of books propounding the value of “living in the now.” One popular author insists that there is no past or future, but only now, the present moment. At any given time, there exists only the present moment. There is always only “now, and now, and now.” Each present moment is followed by the next present moment. More fuzzy thinking. This is merely renaming the ‘past, present, and future,’ somewhat confusingly as ‘now, now, and now.’ There is still the concept of sequential time, one present moment following another.

Perhaps it can be helpful to use the model of ‘spatial Oneness’ (which, once it is understood at least intellectually, exposes the illusion of ‘space’) to come to an understanding of ‘temporal Oneness,’ which will in a similar way expose the illusory nature of ‘time.’ The concepts are parallel:

The idea of discreet separate moments in time is like the belief in discreet separate individuals in space. Just as the separate entities in space are seen not to exist as such, as separate entities, but rather simply as appearances in Consciousness, or as the way Presence manifests: so the separate moments in time can be seen not to exist as such, as sequential moments, but rather simply as appearances in Consciousness, or as the way Present manifests. There are no separate entities: only what can be called This. There are no separate moments: only what can be called Now. There are no individual entities relating to one another: there is only One Presence, and it is All. There are no individual moments following one another: there is only One Present, and it is Eternal.
Put another way: just as there is only one Presence Present, so too there is only one Present Presence.

I'm not sure this can be arrived at intellectually. With the Understanding, the conundrum of time finally simply folds in on itself; the clear understanding that there is no time, of how there is no time, of how time is not, is blindingly simple and obvious, just like the other: just as there is One Presence, so there is One Present.

And yet even this method of explaining 'temporal Oneness' by comparing to 'spatial Oneness' is false. These are not other, not two. Of course. They are a single point. Infinite/Eternal. One Infinite Presence is One Eternal Present. There is no thing called Presence which is being present. There is not really 'This' and 'Now.' They are the same; the suchness, the is-ness of This, Now.

In essence, the illusion of time is exactly the same as the illusion of space, which is exactly the same as the illusion of the individual self. They are part of each other, depend on each other, and prop each other up to form samsara, the objective manifestation brought about through the agency of perception. This is why the illusion of the individual self, or even simply the illusion of the self as an individual 'doer' of anything, can be used as a focal point toward the Understanding. When this illusion dissolves, the illusions of space and time go with it.

Ramana Maharshi spoke about this connection:

"What is eternal is not recognized as such, owing to ignorance. Ignorance is the obstruction. Get rid of it and all will be well. This ignorance is identical with the 'I' thought. Seek its source and it will vanish."
36. Time

And Wei Wu Wei expresses the same thought in Posthumous Pieces:

“Ignorance of what is eternal is due to the concept of ‘time.’ The ‘I-concept’ and the ‘time-concept’ are inseparable, neither can appear to exist without the other: they are dual aspects of what is erroneously conceived as objective.”

Thus we return to the central idea of becoming clear on the issue of subject/object. The belief in the individual self is an identification as that self as subject, which through its perceptions objectifies the rest of the phenomenal universe of space and time. When it is realized that this usurpation of the role of subjectivity is false, that the so-called individual exists not as a subject perceiving but as merely one of the objects appearing in the phenomenon of space and time, then the illusory or dream nature of all such objects and all of space and time can be seen. With the realization that ‘there is nobody home,’

“...the consequent liberation is not only from ‘who?’ but also from ‘where?’ and from ‘when?’ The supposed phenomenal ‘subject’ has ceased to believe in the impossible, and knows at last what he has always been, and what the phenomenal universe has always been – which knows no who, no where, no when.” (Wei Wu Wei)

Then one looks a little differently at the New Age slogan popularized by Ram Das, “Be Here Now.” On the level at which it was intended, it works well as a reminder to mindfulness – although even there it begs the basic question, “who is to be here now?” But in the Understanding, all three words are seen to be redundant; all there is is being, there is only here, there is nothing other than now. Where else can I possibly be but here, now? Even if there is being lost in a memory of the past, that ‘past’ exists only
Perfect Brilliant Stillness

as that memory, that thought, happening now, here. Even when there is worrying about the future or daydreaming happening in a body/mind organism, that worrying or daydreaming is what is happening in that organism, here, now. There can never be anything other than being, here, now. There is only here, and it is all, unbounded, undivided. There is only now, and it is eternal, unbounded, undivided. So relax. There is no effort needed to be here now. You cannot not be. Enjoy.