AN IMPOSSIBLE WEIGHT

"A person is not a thing or a process but an opening through which the absolute manifests."
- Martin Heidegger

"God only knows; God makes his plan. The information's unavailable to the mortal man..."
- Paul Simon

I

THE ENTIRE DIFFICULTY could be summed up like this: the human object has bitten off more than it can chew, taken on more than it is capable of. Armed with just enough of the Consciousness flowing through it to give it just enough intelligence to facilitate a function it calls thought, the human being believes his or her 'self' to be a separate, independent being, autonomous in itself, having
the responsibility of freedom and of choice in its decisions and actions.

But you see, it isn't. The so-called human being is only an object in Consciousness, however much it believes itself to be an independent conscious being, however much it attempts (unwittingly) to usurp the role of Subject.

How can an object in the play of Consciousness, with the entirely limited capacity of an object, a dream character, a character in a movie, not be completely overwhelmed if it attempts to take on the role and responsibilities of Subject, of the dreamer, of the scriptwriter and producer and director of the movie? The human character convinces itself that it has almost complete freedom and therefore responsibility for its actions. It then finds itself nevertheless doing what it is intended to do in the perfect unfolding in the infinite expression of Consciousness, playing its role as it has been scripted. “But I didn’t mean to do that!” “I try to be a better person, but I still find myself acting this way.” “This didn’t happen the way I intended.” “I keep doing this. Why can’t I learn?”

So much energy is spent berating oneself for not living up to what one has become convinced he or she should be. So much guilt. And an equal amount of energy expended trying to avoid that guilt by faulting someone else for not living up to the same expectations. It’s ridiculous. The human organism thinks it is God, and takes on the responsibilities of God, but has only the capacity of a created object. No wonder so many feel so bad about themselves so much of the time.

How can they possibly measure up? It’s an impossible
set-up. And the suffering that the human object brings upon himself by taking on the role of Subject is in fact imaginary, and unnecessary.

It’s a massive case of confused and mistaken identity. The whole idea that there is such a thing as an individual, a self, a person, a human being, is simply a small, innocent mistake. There seems to be all this activity, thoughts, emotions, what writers call a ‘stream of consciousness,’ which gives the illusion of a certain continuity. It is this apparent continuity of brain activity which you think of as your’self,’ but in fact it doesn’t exist, there’s no’thing’ there.

Who you think you are, a human being, is actually much less; a dream character, an apparent body/mind organism functioning as a pass-through mechanism in the expression of Consciousness.

But who You really are is actually immeasurably more; and all of this, including the life of the mind/body thing you think you are, is in truth unfolding perfectly, flawlessly in the pure choiceless Awareness that You truly are.

II

If the dream is the result of “divine hypnosis,” why isn’t the hypnosis complete? Why does anyone wake up?

The Understanding is total grace, complete gift. That it should happen at all, that any should awaken in the dream, is a great mystery. The ego does not get put aside without a struggle; we do not give up our lives easily. The truth is that left to our own devices we would not give it
up at all. What does it take to realize that the 'self' that we have constructed since we were 'born' is not real, does not exist? Sometimes it takes some pretty drastic measures. Intense physical and mental distress, often to the edge of bodily death seems to frequently be a factor in accounts of awakening. Not that that's much help, I suppose. But after awakening occurs, all this is seen in a kind of inverse way. “Whatever it takes to break your heart open and wake you up, that is grace.” Here you are, and it all is what it is. It unfolds perfectly.

Does psychology or therapy have any place in this process of waking up?

It's interesting that you use that word, because that's the difference. Therapy is a process, something the dream characters go through here in the dream. Process and growth and becoming only happen in duality; such is the nature of duality. Awakening is not a process, it is popping out of the context of process, out of duality.

But in retrospect it can be seen that psychotherapy can certainly serve a purpose in stabilizing a sense of self to the point where it becomes safe or even possible to let it go. A very insecure and defensive ego, with very low self esteem, or full of fear and anxiety, will only be further affronted or hurt by being told that it doesn't really exist, that it is only a 'false imagination,' a mistaken idea that needs to be annihilated. Ironically, it takes a fairly strong ego to be able to hear this message and entertain the idea.

But dragging back and forth over the emotional coals of past events in therapy can be a pretty rugged ordeal, and after a point completely counterproductive if you get to
taking it too seriously. From the present perspective, it's clear that it is futile to try to know or 'find out' who one is: that's just chasing after wind. The individual self which psychotherapy is designed to help in fact is an illusion, and that is the whole problem. The crucial insight is in seeing who or what one is not, and psychotherapy is not likely to take you there.

But before awakening or after awakening, the body/mind organism continues to operate as it is programmed and conditioned: and so it is always helpful to know where one's psychological blind spots are. Simply learning what and where these are, without trying to 'fix' them, can be extremely helpful; but beyond that there's not much point working on the ego (or for that matter, working to diminish the ego), since it is only a hologram or illusion which doesn't actually exist on its own merits.

Throughout Ramana Maharshi's teaching is the theme that since the ego has no real existence of its own, it disappears or vanishes when the light of inquiry is brought to it. What you are left with when the falseness of the ego vanishes, is truth. It's that simple. That's what waking up is. "Reality is simply loss of the ego."

It just seems like a lot of people are unhappy, and therapy, different kinds of therapy, can help that.

Well, sure. That's what's available: dream characters are unhappy, so they go to therapy in the dream so they feel happier in the dream. It's a closed system. There are also other ways in the dream to feel happier. But essentially, in case you haven't noticed, unhappiness is inherent in the dream. It's how duality works, and there will be relative
happiness and relative unhappiness as long as there is 'bondage' to the terms of the dream.

In practical terms, nine tenths or more of the perceived problem, this so-called 'bondage,' or more practically, unhappiness, has to do with the concept of responsibility. People do love the concept of free will, go to the block for it, believe life isn't worth living without it. But a consistent examination reveals that it is only an idea, not your actual experience at any point. 'Causation' is so complex that there is no way you can truly say 'free will' has any meaningful input into any action performed by the mind/body you call yourself. Can you actually find one action which you can be sure, which you can prove was yours alone, or yours significantly, or even yours at all and not the result of the interconnected net of influences of genetics, environment, training, culture, conditioning, historical 'accident', 'chance' encounter, and so on? Ultimately, you cannot.

Once this is understood, it is possible to see that what we think of as individuals are not subjects, not points of origin, but are objects, instruments through which Consciousness, 'cosmic force,' 'divine energy' works or flows. The concept of 'responsibility' then pretty much relaxes and goes away. 'You' are no more responsible for what occurs through the mind/body you call your'self' than the flute is responsible for the music played on it by the musician.

And then there is the realization that this is also true of any other mind/body. And so, of course, responsibility's spawn; guilt, sin, shame, pride, arrogance, malice, all pretty much go out the window. 'You' don't 'do' things; nor does anyone else; events happen, and they happen through mind/body organisms as instruments, including the one you call yourself.
38. An Impossible Weight

I'm not sure I can really accept that there's no personal responsibility, but I can see that what you're describing would be a big relief.

It's an impossible weight for the object, the instrument, to try to take on the load of being the determiner, the subject, the one responsible, the one apparently screwing up and making a mess of things: it's essentially crazy-making, as you can see by looking at the world. The only reasonably happy and sane people are the ones who embrace some version of acceptance of what is, as the unfolding in Consciousness; even if it takes the form of a somewhat simple faith such as "let go and let God." The folks who are convinced they can, and have to, determine things for themselves, with all the attendant implications of personal responsibility, are the ones who dig themselves in pretty deep.

And yes, of course, taking personal responsibility is a more mature understanding than faulting and blaming everyone else, and so it is taught as a useful strategy for societies and for individuals in the dream. But ultimately this too is seen to be as empty a concept as the concept of the individual on which it's based.

There's a lot of letting go in this.

The core, central, irreducible teaching, said in some form by any teacher worth listening to, is also contained in the one line from Hebrew scripture, "Be still and know I am God." There is nothing really to teach; if one would only be still, all that can be known is here. All else is dream stuff, all else is just making noise, all else is bondage.
Perfect Brilliant Stillness

But even letting go, or being still, seems like something I struggle with trying to do, and the teaching I've heard is that you can't do anything.

The idea of non-doership is essentially a fairly simple one, but nevertheless it is difficult to talk or even think about it clearly at first because our language and concepts aren't set up for it. The Chinese have a phrase, wei wu wei. Wei is action. Wu is the negative, so wu wei is non-action. That gives the basic duality; action or not action. But then there's this experienced alternative of wei wu wei, which is "action which is not action." Neither sitting doing nothing nor running around trying to accomplish things, but the experience of the necessary action happening. The key is in the idea of who is doing the acting. Nobody is. The acting is happening without a doer. This is what our language and concepts have trouble with.

My mind has trouble wrapping itself around it.

Whose mind? What mind? The 'you' that you think has a mind is an illusion; an idea that we were all taught to believe in, but which turns out to have no basis and no reality. This becomes clear. When you look at it, there isn't really any 'mind.' What is the mind? There's no such separate thing.

What there is, what we all experience, is an apparently more-or-less continuous stream of thoughts. This is what we then call 'mind,' believing that this stream of thoughts is generated from inside our skulls. This is what we have been taught to believe since day one; but look at your own experience. Actually, you know that 'your' thoughts come from elsewhere. Sometimes we say, "I wonder where that
idea came from!’ Where they all come from; Consciousness, Source. The human mind/body instruments are not points of origin. They are not transmitters. They are only relay stations, pass-through mechanisms for Consciousness. Which is where the teaching, ‘you are not the doer,’ comes from: ‘you’ cannot be a doer of anything: things happen through the body/mind organism you think of as ‘you.’

*If I’m not the doer of any action, who is?*

If you need to, you can think about things as being done by Consciousness, through the instruments of the body/mind organisms. But ultimately that too is a projection of ‘Consciousness’ as a being, an entity like ‘God,’ who does things. Often it is said that it is Consciousness, or Presence, or Love, or the Beloved, doing or thinking or experiencing. It can be comforting or inspiring to talk this way, but this is a poetic use of language and concepts. Ultimately the idea of any doer is let go of.

Finally, there is no doer and no thing done, only the doing. No experiencer and no experience, only the experiencing. And that is what Consciousness is: Consciousness doesn’t do anything; it is everything. It is all thoroughly and completely impersonal, both in terms of there being any person here as a ‘me’ and in terms of there being any divine person.

This is the essence of non-duality. There is only All That Is. That is what I Am. There is nothing other than this, either a ‘me’ here or a ‘god’ somewhere else. All is I.

*Here, listen to Wei Wu Wei:*

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"All said and done:
Everything is I
and I am no thing.
All phenomena are objective manifestations.
What I am objectively is the totality of phenomenal manifestation.
What I am subjectively is all that all phenomena are.
Nothing personal about it anywhere or at any stage.
The personal notion is not inherent
and is the whole trouble!"