4.

PROLOGUE

"I can assure you there is no such thing as God. There's no such thing as creation, and there's no such thing as the universe. So there's no such thing as the world, and there's no such thing as you. There's no such thing as 'I.' What is left? Silence!"
- Robert Adams

ONE COULD SAY THAT reality is not at all what it seems or how it appears to be, and that nearly the whole human race is operating under a mass hallucination. One could say this, but it would be greatly inaccurate because the idea that there is a human race, and the idea that there is 'one' to say so, are both actually part of the hallucination. These things we call 'persons' or 'human beings', along with everything else we can either think of or perceive with our senses, are actually only illusory appearances in one
infinite Consciousness, which is all there is.

How are we doing so far? Sounds almost like the ultimate paranoid conspiracy theory, doesn't it? In fact, it sounds so far-fetched and so at odds with everyday perception and common sense that most people if they were to hear it would be inclined to call it crazy raving; laugh, or shrug, and go back to their daily lives.

And yet our histories as well as our religious and philosophical traditions tell us that as far back as they go, there are accounts of the occasional 'human being' becoming convinced that this fantastic-sounding scenario is in fact the truth; and accounts also of them trying to communicate this conviction to others. In fact, such visionaries and such 'raving' are at the foundation of most of the world's great religious and philosophical traditions. Few of these traditions still explicitly claim such ideas as part of their overt teachings or practices, but a little research reveals that they were there at the beginning, in the ideas or experience or vision of the person around whom the tradition formed or in its foundational writings.

Which again is an inaccurate statement, since again the idea that there was a 'person' as an individual entity whose individual ideas or experience were the beginning of a tradition is itself part of the illusion. So you can see that there is something of a communication problem here.

Look at it this way: if you were to grant for the moment, for the sake of argument, that it might be possible for someone to see, come to know, become convinced beyond doubt, that everything that we think of as 'reality' is in fact a mind-generated fantasy, and that this illusion includes all ideas
and words and experiences and perceptions as well as the things we think are the ‘human beings’ having such ideas or perceptions; and granting also for the moment that such a person is not simply insane but may somehow, just possibly, be seeing something others do not see; then in such a case how could such a person communicate to others what he or she sees, when she knows that she herself, all others, and any ideas or words that might be used to communicate are all themselves part of the illusion and therefore quite ineffective?

What analogies, what metaphors or word-tricks might then be used to try to convey what is beyond what can be conveyed? Such things as, “it’s like light but it’s not light, so completely beyond light it can’t be seen,” or “it is everywhere and nowhere at the same time,” or “it is the fullness of what everything is, which is complete emptiness; it is what you already are though you can’t see it,” or simply, “I-Am-That.”

And of course if you’ve delved at all into the mystical or esoteric traditions of the world’s religions you will recognize that this is exactly the kind of thing that Gautama Buddha, Jesus of Nazareth, Rabbi Bal Shem Tov, Jalaluddin Rumi, Adi Shankara, Meister Eckhart, Seng-Ts’an, Ramana Maharshi and various other Zen, Christian, Hasidic, Sufi, Taoist, Advaitin and other ‘spiritual teachers’ are recorded as saying.

Please listen carefully; this next bit is important. It is the opposite of what you have always been told, and what you have been told is not true. What is at issue here is extremely simple. It is not complexity or difficulty which makes this so hard to communicate or to understand. It is very simple
and very easy. It is just that it is so completely at odds with what is believed, and with how experience is commonly interpreted, that the mind cannot comprehend it.

There is an agreed upon, consensus reality which almost the entire human race shares. The world has been around a long time; it is ancient. Into this world, you are born as an individual; you grow, learn, experience life, and die. There is some disagreement concerning what happens after that, except that for everyone else, life will go on - until they also die. Everybody thinks they know this - or some local variation of this. But in fact when you were 'born' you did not know this. You learned this. Everyone else learned it too and so it is an almost universally shared idea. But everybody believing something doesn’t make it true.

From eternity, without time, I Am, the unborn. Just as a dream begins at some point during sleep, so 'at some point' That which I Am appears as Consciousness here, and this world comes into being. I open my eyes: there is experiencing of life in this apparent body/mind. After a certain span of experiencing, I close my eyes: the world ceases to be, and from eternity I Am, the unborn.

What could be simpler, or more obvious?

Every once in a while someone will come along and try to tell folks this, but a consensus reality is tough to crack. It is self-reinforcing and has built-in ways to deal with cognitive dissonance. One way is to call the offenders 'crazy.' Another, just as effective, is to call them 'mystics.' Either way the illusion of separation, the consensus reality, is maintained.
So the teacher works in strange stories, parables, metaphors, actions; statements pronounced one day and directly contradicted the next. Trying to work around the defenses. If you take any one of the teacher’s statements literally, you’ll be off looking where that statement seems to point, at something within the consensus reality, which is not what was intended. Which is why the time-honored way of learning from these characters, if one is so inclined, is to sit with them for some time: months, years, enduring their contradictions and reversals and *non sequiturs* and apparent craziness until enough of these divergent vectors have been absorbed that one can make something of an average of them, to look out beyond them as it were, to a point where they might converge, beyond anything that can be comprehended or imagined.

II

There are those who spend their lives thus, at the feet of such a teacher, but that’s not what occurred in this case. Nevertheless, the pages that follow are an account of what happens when ‘What Is,’ that which cannot be taught, which is beyond the consensus reality of things, ideas, thoughts, experiences, and sense perceptions, is suddenly and spontaneously seen or apperceived; and when all of this so-called reality is seen and clearly understood to be illusion, of the nature of a dream.

Convention would suggest that I refer to what follows as a ‘first person’ account, but you see here we are again, with that little problem with words and ideas and communication. This ‘first person’ who would be relating this account is clearly seen as part of the illusion, a mere character in
the dream, and not in any way as an actually existing individual to whom these events could have occurred or who could be experiencing or thinking or relating anything. After all, if you fall asleep at night and have a dream in which you dream of flying over the mountains, would you, when you awaken, say that anyone actually flew over the mountains last night? No matter how vivid the dream was, the characters, the story, the events, the 'doing,' were, in terms of waking reality, all fictitious.

This analogy of a dream, and waking up from a dream, is one that we will be coming back to frequently. It is an image used by many of those who try to teach or convey or just talk about this, and it is one of the best analogies available, but of course it is only an analogy. It is used for illustrative purposes only; if you get to taking it literally it'll all come apart and make no sense.

When there is a ceasing of the misperceiving of the illusion as real, there is a sudden, complete and irrevocable seeing that there exists not a separate person, but only an appearance in the play of Consciousness which functions in that play or dream as a so-called human mind/body organism. This organism is an appearance only, existing as an illusory, dream-like construct within that which is beyond or prior to this illusion.

This 'That Which Is' can be referred to from within the illusion as Consciousness, or Presence, or All That Is, or even perhaps (with some qualification) as 'God;' and it is understood that this Presence (to pick one term) is all there is, so that anything which is perceived is always and only Presence being perceived as some (illusory) thing. This Presence is what streams or flows, to use the image,
4. Prologue

through the mind/body apparatus, animating it, rendering it conscious; so conscious that it actually thinks, as most others like it also think, that it is an individual autonomous entity, a separate being which is conscious.

But it is not. That is the illusion. There are no separate beings. There is nobody home. There is always only Presence streaming through these apparent forms thus creating this illusion. ‘Me,’ ‘myself,’ ‘david,’ does not actually exist except as a mistaken idea, a misguided and totally conceptual and never ‘real’ separating off of Consciousness into an illusory separate self. And what is realized is that this Consciousness, Presence, All That Is, is what ‘I’ truly is.

III

TRYING TO EXPLAIN WHAT IS, within what is not (which is to say, trying to explain or describe Truth with terms and concepts provided by illusion) is doomed from the start to be particularly fruitless. All there is, is seeing, Understanding, in What Is, in thoughtless, wordless stillness. It is simply impossible to communicate.

Why bother trying? Good question. All I can say is, like the Understanding itself, like ‘life’ itself, the attempts at communication come unsought, unasked for, unwilled, and there is no trying nor any doing.

What follows is a conglomeration of odd bits of scribbled verse, journal entries, emails, letters, answers to questions, conversations reconstructed loosely from memory, and sometimes just sitting down at the computer and typing. Most of it is quite raw and unpolished. And all of it is simply
Consciousness streaming through a mind/body apparatus completely empty of any individual self.

By which there is no special claim being made: the same is true of Consciousness streaming through the mind/body you think of as 'yourself.' You probably think you are reading this. I assure you, you are not. Reading is happening, but there is in no sense a 'you' doing it, and the 'you' you think you are most certainly does not exist. Welcome to All That Is.

I am fully aware that what follows may in places be quite difficult to read and make sense of. The word processor's spelling and grammar-checking functions choked on this document. Basic rules of language: grammar, capitalization, punctuation, syntax, have all been stretched and mutilated in this attempt to get words to point away from their common usage and toward the decidedly uncommon.

Not much can be done about this. There is no intention to be obtuse: words are used in odd ways for a reason; because that's as near as can be said. At this point, the text has been proof-read and spell-checked many times by many readers. If there are odd spellings, punctuations, or usages, these are most likely used intentionally, to convey a meaning; and the meaning would be (perhaps subtly) different if it were done 'correctly.'

Often the text does not flow smoothly; it is frequently chopped up with unconventional words and phrasing when more familiar language would read more fluidly. This is unavoidable. You may find occasions where the language seems to contradict itself or what was said earlier. Given the limitations of language, this too is necessary.
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Many of the themes are revisited, and so some of it may seem to be repetitive. See the repetition as an invitation to go deeper, to look through and beyond. Remember, these words are being used to point beyond themselves, and what is understood the first time they are read is rarely the deepest or the fullest understanding.

And please remember: none of the images or ideas or concepts presented here are themselves true or even directly indicate the Truth. All are only vectors pointing somewhere toward the general direction.

The reason nothing expressed here can be the Truth is that concepts, thought, and language are all inherently dualistic, and what they are trying to express is not. In duality, for every object there is a subject; for every better there is a worse; for each truth a falsehood; as much clarity as confusion; both love and hate, stillness and motion, perfect and imperfect, complete and incomplete.

This is why the masters were, and are, so fond of remarking, "Neti, Neti." Neither this nor that, neither one side nor the other. In duality, and therefore in language, there's always the flip side, the opposite that completes or complements and which is equally untrue.

Inherently dualistic language is used here in a peculiar way, to point to what transcends duality: 'Love' which is beyond love and hate; 'Stillness' that is not the opposite of movement; 'Perfection' which has nothing to do with perfect versus imperfect.

Traditionally, the teaching about this has been referred to as a set of 'pointers' rather than a set of 'truths' for this
very reason; and also for this reason, there is a preference for pointers which indicate what 'All That Is' is not, rather than pointers which attempt to define what it is. Neti, Neti.

All these things, and everything written in the pages that follow, are just concepts, thought bubbles created here in this mind-generated illusion, and as such are severely limited and inherently flawed.

In fact, quite frankly, it's all crap. Eventually all ideas, all experiences, all words, all books, all teachings are beside the point. Eventually all there is, is complete letting go and going beyond; going, completed, beyond. Then everything will cease, everything will have never been, and there is only Understanding, and the Peace that passes all understanding.

When you learn that there is nothing you can do to accomplish this or bring it about, there will be a moment of frustration. But this, like everything, thought, or experience, will only be temporary. Fortunately, it has never been up to 'you' anyway.