"What can you take from here? You come into the world with your fists closed, and you go out of this world with your palms open.”

- Kabir

A CRUCIAL ELEMENT HERE is the idea, the concept, of surrender; and the inexpressible Truth that lies behind, prior to this idea. Most other spiritual traditions, methods of self-improvement, or paths of work treat this as a process, something you work at; working at letting go or at uncovering your stuff so that it can fall away or be purified. But of course here as always the truth is radical; since awakening is the realization that there is no one here to awaken, then the letting go, the surrender, is of one's entire individual existence.

This is where I discover how much bhakti (the spiritual path of devotion) is running in my blood, when it is Rumi and his Sufi way of surrender to the Beloved that resonates
so truly, when it is realized that this is what I had been trying to do, in blind futility of course, all my life. The root of the name 'david' is a Hebrew word which means, 'the beloved;' I should have known; I have always known. And yes, jnana (the spiritual way of knowledge) is the other part of what is in the blood, that drive toward understanding and wisdom; but still it seems more natural to describe the Understanding as an essential intuitive seeing and inward knowing. It is understanding, to be sure, but one which has little to do with comprehending anything.

Teachers of pure non-duality frequently emphasize that there are no prerequisites, nothing that has to come before the Understanding happens. Here's living proof of that. Yet, at the same time, here also is this surrender. Essential, it seems; necessary. Back in the jungle, at that point where all this happened, when nothing happened, surrender also happened. Like the Understanding later, it was total gift, unearned, undeserved, unsought. And I see now, for this mind/body at least, necessary in order for the rest to happen.

How can there be understanding that one is not, without surrendering that one is?

Finally, ultimately, the surrender and the Understanding are the same, even if they are apparently, in perception or experience, separated chronologically. The very concept of 'the total Understanding' necessarily includes surrender, for it begins with the willingness, "Thy will be done;" and ends in seeing that one is not.

Thus there is a sensed rightness in the idea that humility in some form is a mark of a true sage; an intuitive sense that if one doesn't have a sense of humor about themselves
and about what is happening, it is highly unlikely that awakening has occurred. Taking oneself too seriously may be a fairly good sign that there has not been the giving up, the surrendering, of the false idea that one actually exists. Doubts about the authenticity of certain teachers often boil down to this: that while they may have an excellent understanding of the teachings, it is the complete surrender of the sense of individual self that has perhaps not occurred.

In this phenomenality of duality, there is always the flip side, the complementary opposite that completes. Male–female, Shiva–Shakti, jnana–bhakti, understanding–surrender. Disdaining one or the other misses truth. Despite traditions to the contrary, there simply cannot be true jnana without true bhakti, there cannot be the ultimate understanding without the ultimate surrender. Certain personalities will try to avoid one or the other under the guise of some higher wisdom, but always at the cost of wholeness.

There is a tradition that jnana is the higher path because the bhakta relies on a belief in someone or something to be devoted to, whereas the jnani knows there is neither. But true bhakti is pure devotion with no object; and the true jnani knows nothing.

Jnana and bhakti, knowledge and devotion, understanding and surrender, inseeing and outpouring, mind and heart, cannot be divided or opposed; because they are the same.

“The essential basis of self realization is the total rejection of the individual as an independent entity, whether it comes as a spontaneous understanding or through an utter surrender of one’s individual existence.” (Ramesh)
Perfect Brilliant Stillness

It can be seen that the path of the bhakta in devotion leading to surrender, and that of the jnani in knowledge leading to understanding, meet when each takes the final step. The ultimate surrender is the total Understanding; the complete Understanding is the utter surrender unto death of the individual self.

Jesus: “Only he who loses his life will find it.” Again, “Not my will, but Thine be done,” because it is understood that there is no ‘mine,’ no ‘me’ to will. It is the surrender of all vestiges of the sense of the individual person, including, ironic as it may seem, all those hopes and dreams and prayers of ever becoming a good or better person or a person other people might love or like or be drawn to. It is the complete surrender into ‘This Is All That Is.’

And yes, that final surrender, that total Understanding is sudden and happens once. And that once is now. And that now is eternal.