SPINNING OUT

“There was a door to which I found no key; there was a veil past which I could not see: some little talk awhile of me and Thee there seemed; and then no more of Thee and me.”
- Omar Khayyam

“It’s all the same fuckin’ thing, man.”
- Janis Joplin

WHO AM I? THE AGE-OLD QUESTION. Certainly not this body; temporary, changing, physical molecules and atoms and particles that even the physicists tell us ultimately don’t exist as such. Certainly not this mind, thoughts that come from I know not where and which I cannot control. Ultimately it comes to this: the only thing of which we can be sure is the Consciousness deep inside, deep behind and beyond personality, prior to all the variations of who or what I have thought I was; the sense, the knowing, “I Am.” The irreducible intuited Self, the Life Force that exists and
knows it exists. That is all, the only constant. All the rest is a construct, a fabrication.

Under all the layers, each of us has this same experience of "I Am" existence. The same experience of Self. Inexplicably, this common experience is attributed to various selves, each having the exact same experience of Self. This impersonal Self is deemed personal, an 'individual' self inhabiting each individual body/mind. After all, that is what seems apparent. But you don't have to dig very far before this makes no sense. The idea that there are separate, individual selves is only possible because in each apparent self there is experience of Self. This experience has been misconstrued to be a personal experience that belongs to a personal body/mind. The Life Force, the Self animating one body and mind is deemed different from that animating another because the expression of that Self is different in each. We concentrate on the inconstant, variable expression and miss the constant that lies beneath.

The constant: there is only One. There is only one Self, one Awareness, Consciousness finding expression in the many apparent bodies and minds. My knowing "I Am" is the same Self knowing as you knowing "I Am." Reality is that which underlies appearances: the Self, the "I Am," Awareness, Absolute. What we call individuals are only apparent, relative constructs. In fact, all of what is called physical and mental 'reality' is only appearance, relativity. Which is why truly there is nothing happening here, despite what it seems. Despite appearances, nothing in manifest physical 'reality' is real, nothing is happening, and 'david,' along with everything else, is a concept, an idea, a thought bubble which ultimately does not exist.
And so, living happens with much more neutrality. There is no need to strive or to struggle or to become: all of 'us' already are the One, Self, Awareness. What seems to be happening here in apparent 'reality' is not real and has no effect on who I Am, on Self, on Awareness. The wave arises for a time in the ocean, goes the analogy, but it is never other than the ocean, and it returns into the ocean, and the nature of the ocean is unchanged. Nothing has happened. Experiences are not important: in fact nothing is more important than anything else, because nothing is happening here. If there is no importance, then attachment to outcome gradually falls away.

And when I look at 'others' there is a shocking, naked intimacy: I see the same Self that I Am, expressing in a different appearance.

Nisargadatta Maharaj used to tell his listeners repeatedly, "Back up. Go back." Whatever level you are at, whatever place you are thinking or experiencing from, go back from there, find the place or the level which is before that, prior to that. A similar direction is contained in Jed McKenna's injunction, "Further." No matter where you are or where you are coming from, as long as 'you' exist there is a level beneath, prior to that, beyond that, which is where you want to be. Everything else is just dream stuff, layers of mask. Back up, go back, to the I Am which is prior to all. Rumi:

"Sometimes you hear a voice through the door calling you,
as a fish out of water
hears the surf's 'come back!'
This turn toward what you deeply love
saves you."
For a while after it happened, after the jungle, there was an acute awareness of transition, of an Understanding having occurred as a leap, and a sense that this mind and body had yet to catch up. There seemed to be the weight and momentum not only of the life and history of this body/mind, but also that of a culture and a race having a belief that things are otherwise than what was seen now in the light of the Understanding. In daily living the mind or body would respond with a thought or action with which it was accustomed to responding. It was actually pretty amusing, kept me entertained during that time, because there was no 'content,' no supporting emotion or belief which had previously been there and which originally gave rise to these thoughts and actions. They were 'empty.'

Somewhere I came across that analogy of the electric fan which continues to spin for a while after the plug has been pulled. Without the original support, it would seem that these habitual thoughts and actions would fall away, and to some extent this has proved true. Much of that momentum has wound down. On the other hand, to an amusing extent, the david thing continues to behave more or less like david. The organism will respond as it responds, according to the programming and conditioning. It is not a matter of any importance.

After the Realization occurs it can appear from the outside as if nothing has changed and it appears from the inside like nothing is the same. That too is an approximation, and not true, but it's the gist. This is the meaning of the Zen saying, "Before awakening, chop wood, carry water. After awakening, chop wood, carry water." Chopping wood and carrying water are the normal, basic, necessary, everyday occupations in the simple agrarian society where this
saying originated. The point is simply that things seem to carry on pretty much as before. Life goes on. Within, there is Understanding of What Is, where before there was the dream state. But from without, the organism continues its appointed rounds. Why not?

There may be some changes in the organism's routine that those close to it might notice. A little more drawn to silence and solitude perhaps; a little less interest in activities or conversations. Depending on the prevailing culture, the general impression may be that the one so affected is just a little weirder. But the natural functioning of the organism continues in much the same way as it did.

I know that this body is inanimate, not an individual; an appearance only, animated by Self, the One, Awareness. It does not even have a life of its own. Rather, it is being lived. There is an acute awareness of this body/mind organism being lived, rather than autonomously living. What I once called 'my mind' is a stream of thoughts; thoughts that do not originate from any 'me' but from the One Awareness. There is no individual, no david. Everything that appears to happen here, including the thoughts and actions that arise in this mind and body, arise spontaneously from Awareness. In spite of 'my' apparent deliberations.

Since it is obvious that there is no one here to have control over 'my' thoughts or over the course of events in this apparent 'reality,' concepts of guilt and pride and responsibility and obligation all become meaningless. Sure, our societies would find it difficult to exist and function without fostering the belief in these concepts to control individuals and populations; but none of these concepts exist in the What Is of Awareness. Everything arises spontaneously
in Awareness. Nothing needs to happen or needs not to happen. There is no point, no purpose, no ‘why?’

‘Why?’ questions are fundamentally unanswerable. Most go through life constantly asking ‘why?’ and, without realizing it, accepting responses which are not answers to the question. If we ask why the sky is blue, the answer, whether it is scientific or mythic or poetic, does not tell why the sky is blue, but rather how it is that the sky is blue. If we ask why we feel depressed or happy, the answer can be an explanation as to how it is that we feel these ways, but which still begs the question. We talk around the ‘why?’ giving reasons how it is that something is so, not realizing that the ‘why?’ goes unanswered. There is no answer, there is no ‘why?’ Everything arises spontaneously in Awareness. The constant asking of ‘why?’ is simply the mind’s attempt to grasp for control.

It is interesting that in a young child, the incessant asking of ‘why?’ arises at about the same time, the same age, as the emerging sense of separation as an individual self. The mind thinks, if only I could latch on to a reason ‘why?’ all this is happening, I would be in control and be able to sort this all out. So the mind settles for non-answers and maintains its illusion of control, rather than recognize that there is no answer and admit it has no control. There is no point, no purpose, no meaning. Therefore no importance. Therefore no involvement. Nothing needs to be any different.

For one raised with religious beliefs, a fundamental shift is encountered here. Even when those religious beliefs were long ago understood to be blind, misconceived constructs, still there remained the kernel, the sense of the Other.
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Martin Buber's *I and Thou*; Rudolph Otto's numinous sense of *The Idea of the Holy*. Even when a belief in God as a personal being had fallen away, still this idea of the Other had been maintained. An Other toward whom to direct the human sense of awe. Some One toward whom to feel the gratitude. Source. Spirit.

The tendency, without being aware of it, when one hears about this on an intellectual level, is to make 'Presence' or 'Consciousness' that Other, that Spirit; just change the name. You can hear a lot of people talking about Consciousness exactly the way they used to talk about God, or Spirit. Ultimately there is no Other because there is no individual; there is no Thou because there is no I; there is no Spirit because there is nothing which is not Spirit. The split of dualism is not; there is only One. I Am not other than this One.

Trapped in the world of concepts and duality, the mind looses traction, slips, spins out. The thought comes, "there is nothing to think about." Then there is Stillness, there is Awareness.