

Conversations with Martin

Hello J,

Coming back to our email conversation from two years ago, I was wondering if you have written anything new in the meantime, as I find your articles incredibly inspiring. And more than anything else, I'm keen to learn if "you" have passed the gateless gate.

Hi Martin

I've written a series of articles for SGJ which have not been published yet. Some of them are very scientific in nature as they delve into the details of the holographic principle, and some are about the process of spiritual awakening along the lines of Nisargadatta's teachings. In my own journey, I've pretty much exhausted what can be understood at a scientific or conceptual level and my interest has shifted to the process of awakening to the direct experience of spiritual being. I haven't passed through the gateless gate, but I take that only as an indication that I'm not yet ready to die at a personal level. The willingness to die at a personal level (ego death) is the greatest obstacle in the awakening process since it not only requires surrender to God's will but also the willingness to sever emotional attachments. The three aspects of my practice are focusing attention on my own sense of being present to the exclusion of everything else, which is a necessary condition for awakening, surrender, which allows me to experience the integrated state, and severing emotional attachments, which is necessary for ego death. I'll continue this practice until either my body dies or I pass through the gateless gate. I'm attaching my most recent articles.

Hello J

Thank you very much for the new articles. It'll take some time to read them all I guess.

I'm quite fascinated by your approach to reconcile spiritual awakening and quantum physics. The latest research I was following was Donald Hoffman's theory of conscious agents and the idea that a geometric structure called the Amplituhedron (Nima Arkani-Hamed) in decorated permutations might be the structure of consciousness that gives rise to space-time and the physical world. But instead of focusing on theories I should rather focus more on the non-dual practice that you've mentioned. I've neglected this, to be honest.

Hi Martin

The bottom line is that nothing that appears in the world you perceive can tell you anything about the truth of what you really are. The only true thing you can ever know about yourself is your own sense of being present as the perceiver of your own world. That's where you have to focus your attention. First you come to know yourself to be the

perceiver of that world, which is nothing more than a presence of consciousness at the center of that world that exists now, in the present moment, but eventually you come to know yourself to be the Source of that consciousness, (Atman is Brahman in the language of Advaita).

There's nothing wrong with trying to conceptualize how all of this is possible along the lines of the work of Donald Hoffman or Nima Arkani-Hamed, but that scientific conceptualization can only apply at the level of how a holographic world is constructed. My personal preference is to cut to the chase and use the holographic principle directly in its most natural interpretation (along the lines of a Matrix model as formulated in the work of Tom Banks, a collaborator of Lenny Susskind), and to cut out all the bullshit as much as possible. This naturally takes you to the frame of reference of an observer. The construction of a holographic world has to begin with an observer and its accelerated motion. Once you begin with this assumption, then the holographic principle has a perfectly natural interpretation along the lines of the teachings of enlightened beings, like Nisargadatta. That's been my approach.

Hi J,

Just a loose collection of general thoughts and comments (feel free to ignore if you feel they're not relevant):

- You've had an interesting dialogue with Cosmin Visan. Did it go any further, or did you leave it at that?
- Have you ever experienced a psilocybin-induced state of consciousness? Or any other kind of Samadhi-type experience?
- Some neuroscientists and philosophers argue that an integrated form of consciousness comes about because of decreased activity of the default mode network (DMN) and salience network (SN) of the brain. Does that seem plausible to you?
- Are you familiar with the work of Bernardo Kastrup?
- I've read a fascinating book about spiritual awakening ([Amazon](#)) - just as an inspiration in case you are interested.

Hi Martin

That's the extent of my conversation with Cosmin, but I had another interesting conversation with Jose, which is attached at the end of this email. Jose is more in line with my analysis than Cosmin, although he came to these conclusions without using the

holographic principle or relying on the testimony of enlightened beings, which is how I came to my conclusions.

I've never taken psychedelics, but my impression of them is along the lines of how Jed McKenna describes the psychedelic experience as an experience of cosmic consciousness, which is not spiritual enlightenment. The difference is cosmic consciousness is still experienced within the virtual reality of a holographic world, while spiritual enlightenment is experienced when that holographic world disappears from existence (the true nature of what you are is what exists when everything else disappears from existence).

Again, the true nature of what you are is nothing but consciousness, which is called the void, which can only be described in terms of negation as absolute nothingness, although a useful metaphor is to describe it as an ocean of undifferentiated consciousness. By its very nature, it can only be directly experienced when everything else disappears from existence (from your own point of view). Not only does all brain activity cease to function, but your brain disappears from existence along with your entire holographic world.

I am very familiar with the work of Bernardo Kastrup, along with Donald Hoffman and Nima Arkani-Hamed, but again, I find these researchers to be somewhat misguided, as they are only trying to explain how a holographic world is constructed and perceived. They refuse to take the leap into an observer-dependent and observer-centric interpretation of the holographic principle, which is the natural way the holographic principle is formulated in terms of a Matrix model. First the observer comes into existence (at the central point of view of its own holographic world) and then that holographic world is constructed due to the observer's own accelerated motion that gives rise to its event horizon that becomes its holographic screen when qubits of information are encoded on the horizon. Everything perceived by the observer in its own holographic world is a form of information that can be reduced to qubits of information encoded on its own holographic screen. The forms are projected like images (due to the illuminating effect of the light of consciousness) from the observer's own screen to its own point of view and are animated in the flow of energy that arises from the observer's own motion. Different observers can only share a consensual reality to the degree their respective holographic screens overlap like a Venn diagram and share information. In effect, the observers are creating a quantum computer network, but what they perceive is no more real than what appears in a computer-generated virtual reality, like the Matrix. *There is no spoon* because what appears to be a spoon can be reduced to information encoded on the screen. The spoon only appears to bend due to the observer's own motion. *Do not try to bend the spoon. That is impossible. Only try to realize the truth. What truth? There is no spoon. Then you'll see it is not the spoon that*

bends, but only yourself. The spoon only appears to exist and bend when it is being perceived. It is an illusion of perception.

I am not familiar with the book you referenced on Liberation, but unless this fellow describes spiritual enlightenment in terms of an ultimate state of free-fall and dissolution (as the individual consciousness of the observer falls into the void and dissolves back into its source of undifferentiated consciousness like a drop of water that dissolves back into the ocean) he is not describing spiritual enlightenment, which can only be described in terms of falling into and dissolving into the void. He may be describing awakening within the dream (which Jed McKenna calls the integrated state), but not the ultimate state of awakening from the dream. I'd recommend you read the descriptions of Nisargadatta in *I Am That*, Osho in the *Book of Secrets*, McKenna in the *Spiritual Enlightenment Trilogy*, the *Ten Bulls of Zen* in *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, Bernadette Roberts in the *Experience of No-Self*, or Eckhart Tolle in the introduction to the *Power of Now*.

One last point of clarification. At the moment of spiritual enlightenment, when you dissolve into the void and experience the timeless existence of undifferentiated consciousness, your own holographic world disappears from existence from your own point of view. Your brain activity ceases to function because your brain is a part of that holographic world. That's what happens from your own point of view. From the point of view of other observers, your body and brain are still a part of their holographic worlds, but like when you fall into a deep sleep, the neural activity of your brain ceases to function. That cessation of brain function of an enlightened being that enters into a samadhi trance (similar to deep sleep) is the only thing neuroscience can measure about the enlightenment experience. This finding doesn't explain enlightenment, but is correlated with enlightenment. Cessation of brain activity, as observed from the point of view of other observers, is correlated with the enlightenment experience you have from your own point of view. This cessation of brain activity is a marker of ego death as you stop thinking self-concerned thoughts. Ego death (not body death) is a requirement for spiritual enlightenment (the experience of No-self).

Prior Conversations from about Two Years Ago

Dear J

I'm currently reading your articles you had published in the *Scientific GOD Journal*, and I was wondering if you give spiritual advice on the practices you've done to realize yourself as pure consciousness. For years I've been practicing self-enquiry and all sorts of mind gymnastics to focus my attention on my sense of beingness, but other than an intellectual understanding has not been achieved. Or is the desire of ego-death, which basically drives all of these practices, itself the obstacle to self-realization?

Hi Martin

Let me say right off that I'm not enlightened or truth realized. In a technical sense, no one is really enlightened or truth realized, but I can't claim to have a consistent experience of ultimate reality or truth. Of course to experience it is to be it, which is the paradox of being and knowing nothing. The one thing I know for certain is that's the goal. I'm on my own journey, which I'll try to describe in this long rambling note. I see my own writings as a part of that journey, sort of like a process of map making that allows me to know in which direction to travel. I make up the map as I travel along, but ultimately I'll have to throw the map away, like everything else, if I really want to reach the final destination of the journey. Maybe hearing my story will help you in your own journey, or maybe telling my story will help me, but ideally, it will help both of us.

I had never heard the word nonduality before about 18 years ago. From a very early age I had a special fondness for the life and teachings of Jesus, but I didn't really understand this fondness except that I could see there was no hypocrisy in that life. I really didn't feel like I had any sort of a spiritual calling. My heroes from an early age were theoretical physicists like Einstein who looked deeply into the nature of reality. My earliest desire of a vocational nature was to be like Einstein. I had a burning desire to understand the nature of reality. I took this desire as far as I could with my training in theoretical physics until I reached what I thought at the time was a dead end. I switched to medicine because of another burning desire I developed to understand the nature of life.

The other part of my life was a profound psychological disturbance that resulted from my own schizoid personality, combined with certain grandiose and narcissistic tendencies. I had continuous relationship problems that arose from my desire to feel close to another in conflict with my fear of being controlled by others. I could never resolve this conflict. On top of that, I developed my own reactionary desire to control others. My relationships seemed to oscillate from my fear of being controlled by others to my desire to control others. Even my desire to feel close to another was immature as it was based on a possessive type of emotional attachment. Relationship after relationship resulted in only more frustration and heartbreak until I finally began to detach myself from relationships.

Anyway, 18 years ago I was in one of these troubled relationships. I was visiting my girlfriend in San Francisco when a book was delivered to her house. That book was *Spiritual Enlightenment* by Jed McKenna. She told me how she began to read it in her chiropractor's office and thought it was very funny, so she ordered a copy from Amazon. I immediately read the book and was kind of blown away. The book was very funny in a jesting kind of way, but was also very serious. The main points of the book seemed to be outrageous and to fly in the face of common sense, but I really didn't have any good

rational arguments to dismiss them out of hand. I was intrigued and curious about how McKenna described reality. I began a process, as recommended in the book, of either trying to refute what he was saying or confirm it for myself.

Not long after I read his book two things happened. I became interested in theoretical physics again and discovered the holographic principle of quantum gravity. Around the same time as I began to study the holographic principle, I began to read *I Am That* by Nisargadatta Maharaj. I was again blown away. There is an almost perfect one to one correspondence between what the holographic principle says about reality and how Nisargadatta describes reality. This really became clear to me when I read Amanda Geffer's book *Trespassing on Einstein's Lawn*. Once I understood this correspondence in terms of Advaita Vedanta, I really had no doubt that modern physics was indeed confirming this ancient wisdom.

With regard to my own journey, I can see this really began several decades ago when I began to examine my own ego in a serious way. My ego was so painful to me that I had no choice but to examine it and try to understand it. That examination is like a dissection. The real purpose of psychoanalysis is to examine and dissect your own ego so that you can understand it and bring some order to the chaos. In effect, the ego has to be dismantled, which is the only way you can eliminate the pain it creates. The process of deconstructing your own ego is always a process of detaching yourself from things. It is the desire to control things that can't really be controlled that creates the pain and frustration. When you detach yourself from things, you give up that desire to control things, and the pain is gone. In terms of the possessive kind of emotional attachments that characterized all of my painful romantic relationships, freeing myself from that pain was a process of severing those emotional attachments. When you sever the attachment, you lose the desire to control things. The desire to be in control is central to the whole thing, which is why the detachment process can only go forward in a state of surrender. When you surrender, you give up the desire to be in control. Instead of expressing your own personally biased individual will, which at some level is always self-defensive, you surrender to what can best be called divine will, which has no bias. You allow yourself to come into alignment with the normal flow of things. Osho calls surrender a state of deep let-go. You know you're in alignment with the normal flow of things when you feel connected. This isn't a connection at a personal level, like the kind of possessive love between two people that is really only an immature emotional attachment like a baby attached to its mother, but instead an impersonal unattached feeling of connection to all things.

McKenna calls this kind of connectedness that arises from surrender the integrated state, which can only arise from the willingness to give up the desire to control things at a personally biased level and allow yourself to come into alignment with the normal flow of things. McKenna also says that surrender leads to the born again experience, in

which you can no longer identify yourself with an embodied personal form but only with your essential true spiritual nature as a conscious presence that perceives things in the physical world, including the physical person you mistakenly take yourself to be before you go through this transformation.

This is always a death-rebirth transformation in that identity with the physical body has to die away before you can identify yourself with your true spiritual nature. There is no way to go through this transformation without surrender, since the self-defensive desire to control things in a personally biased way is the only thing that keeps us emotionally identified with the emotionally animated form of our own body. When we express self-defensive emotions, we feel self-limited to that personal form as we perceive the emotional energy that animates that form. Only that feeling of self-limitation can result in personal self-identification. That feeling of self-limitation arises from the self-defensive desire to control things in a personally biased way. The only way you can break free from this vicious cycle is by surrendering and relinquishing your desire to control things. Your only alternative is to surrender and put yourself in alignment with the normal flow of things. The rewards you're given for your surrender are the impersonal feelings of connection of the integrated state and the born again experience.

The process of detaching yourself from things can only go forward in a state of surrender, since you have to give up the self-defensive desire to control things in a personally biased way before you can really sever the attachment. The detachment process is the process of dismantling your own ego, which can only go forward in a state of surrender. When you examine, dissect and dismantle your own ego structure, you are really asking the perennial question Who am I? Who is examining and dismantling its own ego? The only real answer you can give is the presence of consciousness that is performing the examination. Your ego structure is essentially an emotional construction, constructed out of emotional attachments and the expression of fear and desire, but the conscious presence that performs the examination can't be characterized in that way.

The ego is emotionally constructed in terms of an emotional relationship that relates a personal self-concept to the concept of some other thing you perceive in the world, but the conscious presence that examines this emotionally constructed ego structure can only be understood in the sense of a subject-object relation, where the subject is perceiving objects in its own world. The subject, as a conscious presence, cannot be an object that it perceives. In the process of examining your own ego, you have to bring yourself into focus as that conscious presence. That's why Nisargadatta stresses the importance of focusing your attention on your own sense of being present or I-Am-ness. Nisargadatta stresses that you have to externalize yourself and see things from the outside. When you examine your ego, you're seeing your ego from outside your ego.

You can see your whole world in this way when you externalize yourself from things. You're seeing things from a higher level of consciousness.

The process of focusing on your own sense of being present is a way to stabilize your consciousness in this state of externalization. You focus your attention on your own sense of being present as a presence of consciousness so you can externalize yourself as you look at your world, but the most important thing you have to look at is your own ego. You know yourself only to be a conscious presence as you examine your ego. You are not the person in the world with an emotionally energized embodied life that you're examining, but only the conscious presence that examines that life. In that examination, you eventually dissect and deconstruct your ego by detaching yourself from things, but that detachment process can only go forward in a state of surrender. You have to be in a state of deep let-go before you can really let go. The more you detach yourself from things, the more you externalize yourself. This detachment and externalization process isn't the final destination of the journey, but a necessary step along the way in your journey. Eventually, you have to look within, into the emptiness of your own being, before you can finally discover the truth of what you really are.

The detachment process, as you examine your own ego structure and sever your emotional attachments to things, is the process of deconstructing your ego that eventually leads to a state of ego-death. You have to become willing to die at the level of ego-death before you can finally discover the truth of what you really are. You have to become desireless. When you're without any desire, you're as good as dead. You can only become desireless when you surrender and sever all emotional attachments. Severing an emotional attachment always feels like something dies inside because part of your emotionally energized ego structure dies away. If you really want to awaken to the truth of what you really are, you have to become willing to die at the level of ego-death, which means you have to become desireless.

Obviously there's something of a paradox here. How can you desire to become enlightened if you have to become desireless to become enlightened? The answer that both McKenna and Nisargadatta give is that you really don't become enlightened because of your desire for truth. Truth is what remains when the false is totally destroyed. The truth of existence is what remains when the false disappears from existence. You only become enlightened because you hate the false so much that you're willing to reject it and destroy it. The way you reject it and destroy it is by withdrawing your focus of attention away from it. When you refuse to pay attention to it, you also stop investing your emotional energy in it that creates it. The main thing you have to see as false is your own ego.

Examining the ego really has two aspects to it. The first aspect is seeing the falseness of your ego as a concept of what you are. Your ego structure is an emotionally

energized self-concept, but that is not what you are. You are the presence of consciousness that's performing the examination. When you see the falseness of your own ego, you destroy it by rejecting it and withdrawing your attention away from it. You sever your emotional attachment to it by refusing to pay attention to it and emotionally energize it. You refuse to play the game. You have to get to the point that you'd rather die at the level of ego-death than continue to live the life of a lie. At the same time that you reject your ego by refusing to pay attention to it, you shift your attention onto your own sense of being present as a presence of consciousness, which is the only true thing you can ever really know about yourself, and externalize yourself.

As you detach yourself, you see things from a higher level. You no longer identify yourself with your ego, but see it from the outside, with a sense of distance and detachment as you externalize yourself. You see the falseness and unreality of the ego. That's how you eventually destroy it by not paying attention to it. The illusion disappears when you see it to be an illusion and you're no longer interested in paying attention to it. Eventually you stabilize your attention on your own sense of being present and know yourself to be nothing more than a presence of consciousness.

You can really only sever your emotional attachments to things and detach yourself from your ego in a state of surrender. You have to give up the desire to control things before you can let go of things, since that desire to control things is the main way the ego defends itself. Your desire to defend yourself is really only your desire to defend your ego. You have to give up that desire to defend yourself before you can sever the emotional attachments that underlie the emotional construction of your ego. You have to surrender and give up your desire to be in control.

McKenna points out that the first step in the journey of awakening is always a surrender. You put your trust in the normal flow of things to sort out what is for the best, and accept things as they are every moment with no desire that things be any different than they are. That's the only way you can bring yourself in alignment with the normal flow of things and feel connected. McKenna calls this the integrated state. In addition to impersonal feelings of connection, there is also a sense of right action as events play out in the normal way, and expressions of creativity. You can always lose yourself in those expressions of creativity.

You can always transcend your ego in an expression of creativity. This is the true function of art. Artists lose themselves in their expression of creativity. You can also lose yourself and transcend your ego in service to something greater than yourself. An expression of creativity is just an example of something greater than yourself. That act of service or expression of creativity is an aspect of surrender, as you allow yourself to come into alignment with the normal flow of things. For me, my writing is an expression of creativity, but I have other expressions like working in my garden or playing my guitar.

People who devote themselves to acts of service to something greater than themselves are doing essentially the same thing. They are transcending their ego and losing themselves in either an act of service or an expression of creativity.

Walker Percy points out that for many artists this transcendence of ego has a reentry problem if the state of surrender is not stabilized. When artists come back from transcending their ego in an expression of creativity, they come back to their own shitty self-defensive personal lives if they don't experience those lives in the same state of surrender. As soon as you try to control things in a self-defensive, personally biased way, you only interfere with the normal flow of things, create an emotional disturbance in that flow, and make things worse for yourself as you experience the pain and frustration of trying to control what can't be controlled. Surrender not only has to apply to expressions of creativity in the sense of being an artist, but to your whole life, which is also an expression of creativity.

McKenna also points out that surrender and the integrated state naturally lead to the born again experience. When you give up the desire to control things and detach yourself from things, you naturally begin to experience yourself as a presence of consciousness that perceives things in a subject-object relation. You no longer can identify yourself with anything, specifically not with your ego or personal self-concept, but can only know yourself to be the conscious presence that perceives all things. That shift in identity is the nature of the death-rebirth transformation. You have to go through this transformation before you can really externalize yourself and see things with a sense of detachment. The more you detach yourself, the more you externalize yourself. The ego dies away in the sense that something dies inside of you as you detach yourself from things. Your ego literally dies away as you sever emotional attachments in a state of surrender.

The ultimate goal is to become egoless and desireless. That's what ego-death means. When you look within, into the emptiness of your own being, in this egoless and desireless state, the miracle happens. The gateless gate opens and you discover the truth of what you really are.

McKenna makes the point that spiritual enlightenment always follows a *death-rebirth transformation* that eventually leads to the *experience of No-self*. The *Self is an untruth* that must die away before the *truth of No-self* can be realized. You don't become enlightened because of your desire for *truth*. You become enlightened because you hate the *falsehood* so much that you're willing to let it die away. You have to get to the point of hating the lie so much that you'd rather die at the level of *ego-death* than continue to live the life of a lie. You have to become willing to die at the level of *ego-death* before you can realize the *truth*. The *truth of existence* is what remains when everything false disappears from existence. Everything you can perceive in your own world is *unreal* in

the sense of being an illusion, like in a virtual reality, but the number one illusion is your own ego. Even the *Self* that identifies itself with its ego is a part of that illusion.

The holographic principle makes an important point that cannot be overemphasized. Expression of desire only creates more falseness. That falseness can only be destroyed in a desireless state. The expression of desire arises with the motion of the *Self* relative to its motionless *Source*. That expression of emotional energy is the only thing that gives rise to a holographic screen that encodes information for everything the *Self* can observe in its own holographic world. The form of all things are projected like images from the screen to the observer's central point of view and animated in the flow of energy that arises from that motion. That holographic world is the falseness that can only disappear from existence in a desireless state when that motion comes to an end. The falseness is only destroyed when the expression of emotions comes to an end. Since that holographic world can only arise in a *subject-object relation* as the *Self* perceives the images of that world, the *Self* is a part of the holographic illusion. When the *Self* emotionally identifies itself with the form of an emotionally animated person that appears in that world, the *Self* is identifying itself with its ego, which only compounds the nature of the illusion.

The ego is emotionally constructed as a body-based personal self-concept is emotionally related to the concept of some other thing that appears in the world you perceive. People are social animals, and emotional expressions of fear and desire predominately arise in the setting of emotional attachments to others. The expression of emotions is what creates the emotional relationship between *self and other* inherent in all emotional attachments that underlie the emotional creation of all personal self-concepts. The *Self* can only identify itself with its ego because it feels emotionally self-limited to a personal form as it perceives the self-limiting expression of emotional energy that animates that personal form. The emotional relationship between a personal form and the form of another is how the ego is emotionally constructed, but in a twisted way, the *Self* is emotionally identifying itself with that personal form since it feels emotionally self-limited to that personal form. The *Self* perceives things in its own world in a *subject-object relation*, but when the *Self* identifies itself with its ego, it is as though that personal form perceives things. A personal form can only transmit or process information, while the perception of a form is like the projection of an image of that form from a screen to the point of view of an observer. The *Self* is the observer present at that point of view in relation to the screen. The *Self* as a presence of perceiving consciousness arises at a point of view in relation to the screen.

The perceivable form of a person is reducible to information encoded on the screen, but the consciousness of the observer is not. The *Source* of the observer's consciousness does not arise from a perceivable form that appears on the screen. There is only confusion about the *Source* of consciousness due to the feelings of self-limitation that

arise as that personal form is emotionally animated, which leads the *Self* to emotionally identify itself with that personal form. The *Self* is confused because that expression of emotion literally arises from the motion of the *Self* relative to its *Source*, but the *Self* ignores its *Source* and only focuses its attention on the projected personal form. That projected personal form is only an illusion of what the *Self* really is, but when the *Self* ignores its *Source*, it mistakenly attributes the personal form to be its source. The *Self* is as much a part of the illusion as the personal form it perceives, since its ego can only be emotionally constructed in a *subject-object relation*. The only way to realize the *truth* is to totally destroy the illusion. The *truth* of existence is what remains when the illusion disappears from existence. The only way to destroy the illusion is for the *Self* to cease to exist as an individual presence of consciousness.

As a presence of Atmanic consciousness, you are always present now, in the present moment. As long as you perceive things in your own world from your own point of view, you are always a presence of consciousness that arises at a point of view, and you are always present now. The only true thing you can ever know about yourself is your own sense of being present. As a presence of consciousness, you are always present now, in the present moment. That sense of being present is always the same sense of being present every moment, while your emotionally animated personal form changes in form from moment to moment. There is only an illusion of the continuity of your personal form in time because of your memory of past events and anticipation of future events as your personal form is self-replicated in a recognizable way over time, but even that memory of the past and anticipation of the future is perceived now. You are always present now, but an illusion of your personal continuity in time arises with personal memory that creates the illusion that you are a person in the world you perceive. Memory can only be created as an emotional projection from the present moment, and you have to focus your attention on creating your own memories. The emotional projection of memory is an integral part of the emotional construction of a personal self-concept. You have to focus your attention on your self-concept to emotionally construct your self-concept, but when you focus your attention on your self-concept you're focusing on your memory of past events or your anticipation of future events. You're not focused on the present moment. That's why one of the first instructions in the awakening process is to focus your attention on your own sense of being present in the present moment. When you do that, you not only stop creating memories, but you also stop creating a personal self-concept. You have to stop creating memories and a self-concept before you can focus your attention on your own sense of being present, which you can only bring into focus as you focus your attention exclusively on the present moment.

When you stop the emotional projection process of creating personal memory and a personal self-concept, and focus your attention only on the actual events of the present moment, you allow yourself to come into alignment with the normal flow of things.

McKenna refers to this state of alignment as the integrated state, which always follows a *death-rebirth transformation* as you relinquish your personally biased desire to be in control of events. That desire to be in control is always self-defensive and leads to the expression of personally biased emotions that create an emotional disturbance in the normal flow of things. That emotional disturbance is what creates the feelings of personal self-limitation that underlies the emotional construction of a personal self-concept. This can only happen because of your personal bias in the focus of your attention that underlies the emotional projection of all personal memories. When you give up the desire to be in control, you lose that personal bias and stop creating those personal memories. Without those personal memories, you stop constructing a personal self-concept. Your attention is no longer focused on the events you remember about the past and anticipate about the future, but is only focused on the actual events of the present moment. As a presence of consciousness that observes the events of the present moment, that is the only way you can lose your personal self-concept. You have to stop focusing your attention on it. When you lose that personal bias in the focus of your attention, you naturally come into alignment with the normal flow of things.

In religious terms, this state of alignment with the normal flow of things in which you lose your personal bias that creates your personal self-concept is called the *born again experience*. Your identity as a person dies away. This can only happen when you give up your personally biased desire to be in control, which all religions refer to as a surrender to divine will. When you lose your personally biased individual will and surrender to divine will, you come into alignment. In that state of surrender, you accept the actual events as they actually are and stop opposing them. Instead, you develop a trust in the normal flow of things to sort out what is for the best. Roberts refers to this state of alignment as the first movement of life, which she describes as a mystical union of the *Self* with its divine *Source*. The *Self* is your spirit, and this state of mystical union is the union of the spirit with its spiritual *Source*. The motion of the *Self* is literally coming into alignment with the expression of divine will that gives rise to the normal flow of things. In this state of mystical union, you're no longer opposing the normal motion of things by creating an emotional disturbance in the normal flow of things. Roberts refers to the second movement of life as the experience of *No-self*. Ironically, the experience of *No-self* is inherently the end of that motion. When the motion of the *Self* comes to a motionless end, the individual consciousness of the *Self* dies away and only the *One* consciousness of *No-self* remains. This experience of *No-self* is inherently a motionless state in which no emotions are expressed.

When the individual consciousness of the *Self* dies away, only *One* consciousness of *No-self* remains. This death of individual consciousness is the nature of becoming enlightened, which enlightened beings describe as a *dissolution*, like a drop of water that dissolves into the ocean. It's often stated that enlightenment follows from looking

within and focusing your attention on your own sense of *being present* or *I-Am-ness*, but that isn't the whole story. It's only when you look into the *emptiness* of your own being in an *egoless* and *desireless state* that you can *fall into the void* and your individual consciousness can dissolve back into *One* consciousness.

That *fall* is the nature of *passing through the gateless gate*. The gate is the *Self*, and the gate only opens when the *Self* becomes *selfless and desireless*. In that desireless state, individual consciousness dies away in the sense that the *I Am* becomes an *I-am-not*. This is an *I-death*, in which there is *no I*. *Falling and dissolving into the void* is only possible in this desireless state. The motion of the *Self* must come to an end relative to its motionless *Source*. The end of that motion is the end of the expression of emotions. This desireless state is not only the death of the ego, but also the death of the *Self*, as individual consciousness dissolves back into undivided consciousness. In that death, everything in the world perceived by the *Self* disappears from existence, but even the individual existence of the *Self* ceases to exist at an individual level. In that dissolution, only the *absolute nothingness of No-self* remains.

This *I-death* only becomes possible when the *Self* refuses to *be present* to perceive its own holographic world. That holographic world is always created in a *subject-object relation* as the *Self* perceives images of that world. When that world is not perceived, it disappears from existence from that particular point of view. When the *Self* refuses to *be present* to perceive its world, that *I Am presence* becomes an *I-am-not*. That holographic world is the illusion that must disappear from existence for the *truth of No-self* to be realized, but that can only happen if the *Self is not present* to perceive that world. The *Self* dies away when it refuses to play the game. The only thing that keeps the *Self* interested in the game is its emotional self-identification with its ego, which is why this *I-death* is only possible in the setting of *ego-death*.

The *Self* must itself die away to realize the *truth of No-self*, and that can only happen through a *self-destructive process of ego-death*. You have to examine and deconstruct your own ego. Ultimately, you have to detach yourself from everything to undergo this process of *ego-death*, since only the emotional energy of emotional attachments, expressed in terms of fear and desire, can emotionally construct the ego. You deconstruct your ego by severing your emotional attachments. When you sever an emotional attachment, it always feels like something dies inside since part of your ego structure dies away. Your ego is entirely an emotional creation. Being without desire is as good as being dead. To awaken to your own *truth*, you have to go through this dying process. You have to accept your own death. That acceptance of death is always a surrender in which you give up your desire to be in control and defend yourself. You surrender by relinquishing your desire to be in control and you deconstruct your ego by severing your emotional attachments. McKenna is worth reading if for no other reason than to know what the hell you're getting yourself into with all this enlightenment stuff.

Who really wants to know that their life is an illusion and they only really exist at the level of *absolute nothingness*? The answer of course is nobody. When you die at the level of *ego-death*, you become nobody.

The irony is that all personal memories, self-concepts and other forms of mental imagination are actual events that are being perceived in the present moment, but their perception by the *Self* is a private experience that is not being shared within the consensual reality that the *Self* shares with other points of view. In a convoluted and twisted way, the *Self* is disconnecting itself from that consensual reality when it emotionally constructs a personal self-concept through the emotional projection of personal memories and emotionally identifies itself with that personal self-concept. In effect, an illusion is being wrapped within an illusion that is being wrapped within an illusion. McKenna describes this wrapping process as the layers of an onion. When you peel away all the layers of the onion, what do you find inside? The answer is nothing.

The *Truth of No-self* can only be discussed in terms of negation and not at a conceptual level. The direct experience of nondual reality cannot really be discussed since *absolute nothingness* cannot really be conceptualized. You can experience it but you can't talk about it in terms of concepts, except for the concepts of a road map that point out travel directions in your journey.

In my own journey, I feel like I've entered the early stages of the integrated state. For the most part, I feel connected to things and often lose myself in expressions of creativity. I've learned to put my trust in the normal flow of things to sort out what is for the best and to accept things as they are. For the most part, I keep myself in alignment as I allow myself to be carried along by the flow of things. I've learned not to resist it or fight against it, since that can only make things worse and create more pain and frustration. I've learned to surrender and let go. Sometimes I have the sense of my own consciousness hovering above my body as it looks down on the life of the person I appear to be, which I take to be the early stages of the born again experience and the externalization of my consciousness. Along the same lines, I focus my attention on my own sense of being present as much as possible while detaching myself from things. I try to keep myself emotionally detached and non-identified, except for the identity of the presence of consciousness that I know myself to be as I perceive things with a sense of detachment.

There's one last important aspect of the awakening process that McKenna calls focus and intent. You have to have a clear, unconflicted intent and focus your time, energy and attention on the process like a laser beam. In my own journey, I learned this lesson when I studied physics. The only way you can really understand physics is if you solve problems. There is a standard set of problems that you have to solve, which usually takes you several years. This standard set of problems are the same problems that the

great physicists have solved over the history of physics. As you solve this standard set of problems, you're recapitulating the history of physics. That's the only way you can really understand physics.

In the same way, when I began to examine my own ego and its psychological problems, I was solving the problem of the ego. Again, there is a fairly standard set of problems that needs to be solved, which can take years to solve. These problems have to do with the nature of the emotional expressions of fear and desire and with emotional attachments. You have to find a way to solve the problems of fear and desire and emotional attachments. The standard set of problems at a psychological level is the way fear and desire and emotional attachments are expressed. That emotional expression is how the ego is created.

The way fear and desire are expressed for us social animals is in terms of emotional attachments. At its core, all desire is the desire to live the embodied life of a person in the world, and all fear is the fear of body death and nonexistence. The way you solve the problem of the ego and its emotional attachments is by severing emotional attachments. The way you solve the problem of fear and desire is by externalizing yourself and seeing the life of the embodied person in the world you appear to be from a higher level of consciousness with a sense of distance and detachment. That's how you resolve emotional conflicts.

When you externalize yourself in a detached state of surrender, the only true thing you can know about yourself is your own sense of being present as a presence of consciousness. In that state you do nothing. You're only watching as things play out in the normal way. You have to get to that level of awakening before you can take the next step, which is to look into the emptiness of your own being. Only when you look within, into your own emptiness, in a desireless and egoless state can you finally discover the truth of what you really are. There is a natural progression of the awakening process. You have to become willing to do nothing before you can become nothing, which is a necessary step in finally knowing that nothingness.

If you haven't already, I'd recommend you read *I Am That* several times until you've totally digested what Nisargadatta is really saying. McKenna's *Spiritual Enlightenment* trilogy is also very good. The first book is an overview, the second book explores the nature of severing emotional attachments, and the third book is an exploration of surrender and the integrated state. Everything Osho wrote on the subject of surrender and letting go is also very good. If you haven't already seen it, Bernadette Roberts' book *The Experience of No-self* is also very good. There's a website called the *Enlightenment Myth* that describes the death-rebirth transformation in graphic detail that's worth reading if for no other reason than to know what the hell you're getting yourself into with all this enlightenment stuff. McKenna makes the same point. Who really wants to know

that their life is an illusion and they only really exist at the level of absolute nothingness? The answer of course is nobody. If you want to explore the connection between the concept of nonduality and modern physics with its holographic principle, you can take a look at my website, but be forewarned that this is only a discussion at a conceptual level. The direct experience of nondual reality cannot really be discussed because absolute nothingness cannot really be conceptualized. You can experience it but you can't talk about it in terms of concepts, except for the conceptual nature of a road map that points out travel directions in your journey.

Hi J,

Thank you very much for your wonderful email. I guess you are right in that everyone has to follow his or her own journey, but there seem to be patterns among those who reached the goal. I'm familiar with "I Am That" and much more literature on non-duality and Vedanta Advaita, but it's one thing to intellectually understand it and another to experience it. I also read Michael Talbot's "The Holographic Universe", although I lack the physics background to completely grasp this stuff. My background is in philosophy, and this continues to be my main point of access, although I must admit that I've been trying to meditate and self-enquire for quite a while, unfortunately with poor results. I once tried 5MeO-DMT to experience a non-dual state, but of course it didn't trigger a permanent loss of the ego. But it was quite interesting to at least see that consciousness can be separated from a "me/I", which I never thought was possible, because until then, that was always the same. Consciousness without an "I" seemed to be ridiculous. You did refer to the website <https://enlightenmentmyth.com/>, but it seems to have no content.

Again, I'm really grateful for your response, and I'm happy to have found a sincere seeker and scientist who's encouraging me to continue on this journey. I hope you don't mind if I occasionally come back with questions or the need for advice.

No Problem Martin

Consciousness without an I is Brahman. Consciousness with an I is Atman. Ultimately, Atman is Brahman. Bernadette Roberts describes the enlightenment experience very accurately in her book *The Experience of No-self*. Like Meister Eckhart, she describes the experience as the dissolution of the individual spirit (The Self) into the Supreme Spirit (The Source or God-head). This is an oceanic experience, like a drop of water that dissolves into the ocean. In conceptual or scientific terms, Brahman or the Source is a void of absolute nothingness, Atman or the Self is an observer at a point of view, and the images of a holographic world are displayed on a holographic screen. That screen or surface arises as an event horizon because the point of view of the observer is moving relative to the unmoving ocean. When that motion comes to an end, which is to

say when the expression of emotions comes to an end in a desireless state, that holographic world disappears from existence from that particular point of view because the motionless observer no longer has a holographic screen (the ocean no longer has a surface). Enlightened beings describe this experience as falling into and dissolving into the infinite void.

Hi J,

I have just ordered Bernadette Roberts' book, thank you for the literature tip. What I'm kind of struggling with is how to interpret those religious > terms like "Brahman", "Atman", "Supreme Spirit", "God-head", etc. Is that which is denoted by those terms really the absolute, or is it just a certain state of consciousness created by a reduced activity of the default mode network? I guess you interpret those terms in the light of the hologram theory of the universe/consciousness, which might provide you with much more scientific evidence. When you speak of enlightened beings, have you ever encountered one, or do you consider any of the well-known non-duality teachers "enlightened"?

Hi Martin

I always look for consistency when assessing if someone who claims to be enlightened is really enlightened or just pretending to be enlightened. People pretend because they really believe themselves to be enlightened, not because of any malice or intentional deceit. They are deceiving themselves. The best test is to assess if they believe in their own Self. Enlightened beings believe in nothing, and certainly don't believe in the reality of their own Self. They know their Self is an illusion, just like everything else they perceive. The only thing that is really real is the absolute nothingness of No-self, which can't be perceived in the conventional way, but can be experienced. The problem is, the absolute nothingness of No-self is inherently non-conceptual in nature, and so that experience can't be discussed in conceptual terms. When I look for consistency, this is what I'm looking for. As best I can tell, all the followers of Ramana, like Papaji and Mooji, are deceiving themselves when they speak about the Self as the ultimate nature of reality. No-self is the ultimate nature of reality, but there's no point in speaking about it since it can't be conceptualized. To paraphrase Shankara (with a bit of my own embellishment), No-self is the only truth, the world (as perceived by the Self) is a (holographic) illusion, and ultimately there is no difference between the Self and No-self. Anyone who claims that anything other than the absolute nothingness of No-self is real is a fraud. Ultimately, nothing is real. That's the conclusion that Amanda Geffer came to when she analyzed the holographic principle, which is also the answer to the central question of the Matrix: What is real? The answer is nothing, but don't ask me to explain what nothing really is. It's unexplainable.

By the way, one of my favorite quotes is from the Big Lebowski: "We're nihilists. We believe in nothing", which McKenna rephrased as *No belief is true*.

Hi J,

I have just finished reading „the experience of no-self“ and „trespassing on Einstein’s lawn“ and found them intriguing. As to your comments below, I still have a few questions. For example, why should I follow Nisargadatta’s advice to pay attention to the sense of self, which seems like something real, if only No-self is true? Is the sense of self identical to the concept of ego and can be transcended; is the sense of self the illusion to overcome, or is it real? I’d like to fully grasp this spiritual advice.

I was wondering if I can speak with you directly via Skype or zoom to discuss those questions.

Hi Martin

The only thing I can tell you is that enlightenment is the result of passing through the gateless gate. The gate is the Self, but you only pass through the gateless gate when the Self becomes selfless. You have to focus your attention on your own Self as a presence of consciousness with its own sense of I-Am-ness or being present, but you also have to become selfless, which means you have to destroy your ego and become desireless. The reason you have to destroy your ego is because the Self identifies itself with the ego. Self-identification is the nature of delusion. You have to destroy your ego, which is your personal self-concept, before you can become selfless.

Ultimately, you have to destroy your own sense of being a Self, which is your own sense of individual existence. The final step in the process of destroying delusion is to destroy your own sense of being a Self. That's when enlightenment occurs. Individual being dissolves into undivided being. The Self dissolves into No-self. When you become enlightened, you become aware of the Self as a moving point of illuminating and perceiving consciousness. You become aware of the Self from the darkness, silence, stillness, emptiness and nothingness of the void.

That darkness is the Source of the light of consciousness that illuminates the world and the Source of the Self as a moving point of illuminating and perceiving consciousness. When you become enlightened, you can turn off the light of consciousness and stop illuminating the world you perceive. You do that by withdrawing your attention away from the world you perceive. When you stop illuminating the world, you return to the darkness. When you become enlightened, you know yourself to be the darkness of the Source, not the illuminating Self.

I know there's a paradox here, which Shankara expressed as Atman is Brahman. Ultimately, Atman dissolves into Brahman, which is to say Brahman is the Source of Atman, just like the ocean is the source of a drop of water that ultimately returns to and dissolves into the ocean. Atman knows itself to be Brahman when Brahman becomes aware of Atman. That's what you know when you become enlightened, which happens when you pass through the gateless gate. The experience of becoming enlightened is the experience of individual being dissolving into undivided being. That happens when you return to the darkness, silence, stillness and emptiness of the void.

I'm attaching my latest article that attempts to explain this state of affairs in more detail.

Hello J,

Thank you very much for your article, which was a bit too challenging for me to grasp. I'd be extremely glad if I could speak to you in person.

Many thanks in advance for your consideration.

Hi Martin

My preference is to communicate by email. I like to write my thoughts down and look at them before communicating them. I find that speaking extemporaneously in person is too haphazard to be of much value except for trivial things, like talking about the weather.

After some reflection, I've decided to try to answer your question in a more down-to-earth way. The problem with the answers I'm giving, which as you say are challenging to grasp, is what Jed McKenna calls cognitive dissonance. The answers I'm giving are in conflict with your belief system. The problem isn't the answers I'm giving. The problem is your belief system. That's what you need to examine. Examining your belief system means examining your ego structure.

The number one piece of advice Nisargadatta gives in I Am That is to focus your attention on your own sense of being present as a presence of perceiving consciousness, which he calls I Am or the Self. You have to know yourself to be a presence of consciousness at the center of the world you perceive, but that's not the only advice he gives. He also stresses the need for letting go and detachment. The nature of letting go is severing emotional attachments. He also stresses the need to examine your ego and destroy the ego, which he calls the I-am-the-body idea. By the ego, he means the mentally constructed personal self-concept, which is emotionally energized.

Severing emotional attachments is the nature of deconstructing the ego. Nisargadatta doesn't like to use the word surrender, but he does stress the need to give up the desire

to be in control, which is how both Osho and Jed McKenna define surrender. You not only have to let go or sever your emotional attachment to things to deconstruct your ego, but you also have to give up in the sense of surrender, which means giving up your desire to be in control of things. The reason we want to control things is because we live in the fear of death. When we feel like we're in control, we feel powerful and are able to push away the fear of death and make it unconscious, which is a denial of death. When we surrender and stop defending ourselves, we're accepting death. You can only deconstruct your ego in a state of surrender in which you accept the death of your ego. Severing emotional attachments can only go forward in a state of surrender because what you're really doing by detaching yourself from things is killing your ego. You have to accept that death.

You can read many spiritual gurus about the need for surrender and to detach yourself from things, but they all say essentially the same thing. I read Nisargadatta, Osho and McKenna, and that was enough for me. To be clear about things, your ego is a mentally constructed personal or body-based self-concept that is emotionally energized. You kill your ego by severing emotional attachments and letting go. That's how you take the emotional energy out of your ego, but you can only kill your ego if you accept the death of your ego. That's why you have to sever your emotional attachments in a state of surrender. You surrender by giving up the desire to be in control of things. That desire to be in control is a denial of death. Before you can surrender, you have to confront your own fear of death, stop denying it, and accept it.

The reason you have to kill your ego is because the Self, which is the presence of consciousness at the center of your world that perceives everything in that world, identifies itself with the ego. Self-identification with ego is the nature of delusion. The whole goal of this killing the ego thing and destroying delusion is to bring personal self-identification to an end, but that can only happen if you deconstruct the ego. You deconstruct the ego by taking emotional energy out of its mental construction. You do that through a process of severing emotional attachments in a state of surrender. You can only let go if you also give up. Severing an emotional attachment always feels like something dies inside. To kill your ego you have to accept the death of the ego.

Before you can sever an emotional attachment to another, you have to see how you're trying to control their behavior in order to force them to satisfy your own desires. You have to see the immaturity of your desire to control them, like a baby that wants to control its mother. You have to see the futility of your desire to control them because nobody wants to be controlled and your attempts to control them will always be resisted. You can only sever your emotional attachment to another when you give up your desire to control them. Giving up the desire to be in control is a surrender. You have to give up your desire to be in control and have power over others before you can sever your

emotional attachment to them and let go. Severing emotional attachments can only go forward in a state of surrender when you give up your desire to be in control.

When you sever an emotional attachment, it feels like something dies inside because part of your ego structure dies away. Your ego is always mentally constructed in an emotional relationship between self and other, where the concept of self is mentally constructed as a personal body-based self-concept and the concept of other is mentally constructed as the concept of whatever the other thing appears to be that is in emotional relationship with the self-concept. The other thing is usually another body. When you take the emotional energy out of that relationship by severing the emotional attachment, the relationship falls apart. That's how you deconstruct your ego. You're bringing the emotional relationship between self and other to an end. At the level of the body, you're no longer expressing those emotions. At the level of the Self, which is the presence of consciousness that perceives the whole thing, the motion of the Self is no longer expressing that emotional energy. The Self is withdrawing its attention away from the relationship between self and other when the emotional attachment is severed. When the Self withdraws its attention away from the relationship, the Self also withdraws its investment of emotional energy in the relationship. The Self can only identify itself with its ego when it feels emotionally self-limited to the form of the body, and that feeling of self-limitation only arises when the self-limiting emotions inherent in all emotional attachments are expressed. Those self-limiting emotions relate the body to another body, but their expression comes to an end when the emotional attachment is severed. That's how the emotional relationship between self and other comes to an end, which brings to an end the Self's emotional identification with its ego. That's the only way the Self can stop emotionally identifying itself with its ego.

The next question is what are these emotional attachments that you need to sever? This is where everybody is different. Everybody has different emotional attachments, although there are some general similarities, like our attachments to our parents and significant others. I can't tell you what your emotional attachments are. You have to discover them for yourself. Jed McKenna calls this the search and destroy mission. In my case, I was highly motivated to understand my ego at a psychological level because of the emotional pain my ego gave me. This sent me searching for books on psychoanalysis, specifically on how the ego is constructed. One of the first useful books I discovered was *Our Inner Conflicts* by Karen Horney. If you're interested in what psychoanalytic theory says about how the ego is constructed, there are a number of books I can recommend like *Self and Others* by Gregory Hamilton and *The Denial of Death* by Ernest Becker. If you're interested in the neuroscience of how the ego is emotionally constructed in the mind, I'd recommend *The Feeling of What Happens* by Antonio Damasio.

In any case, the emotional construction of your ego is what you have to examine, and that means you have to discover the emotional attachments that you need to sever in your search and destroy mission as you deconstruct your ego. This is the most down-to-earth advice I can give.

Thank you, J, no problem at all. I'm thankful for the time you spend replying in writing.

Hi Martin

I wrote up our communications along with some additional material into two short articles that I'm attaching. These articles along with the previous articles I sent you basically sum up everything I know about the nature of spiritual enlightenment, which I'm sure there are many who would say, I know nothing about it.

Hi J,

Thank you very much for all your efforts you put into this, this is quite helpful. So to summarize and check if I understand this, if there is a path to enlightenment at all, it has two main components:

- Paying attention to the sense of self ("awareness of awareness" practice)
- Surrender the ego

Can you explain why the "paying attention to the sense of self" practice is required and why it is successful? As I understand it, the sense of self is an illusion, so if I focus on this illusion, will it vanish one day?

As to surrender, does that mean that I have to accept and leave everything as it is? For example, if I'm having a quarrel with my wife that frustrates me, does surrender simply mean to become aware of the frustration and accept it (giving up controlling it)?

Hi Martin

Nisargadatta says the Self is the doorway through which you pass when you become enlightened (the gateless gate in the sense of Zen or the doors of perception in the sense of William Blake). Nisargadatta says you have to be at the doorway to pass through the doorway. The doorway (the Self) is a presence of consciousness at the center of its own world that perceives its own world. When you're perceiving your own world, you are that presence of consciousness at the center of your own world. That presence of consciousness always arises in a subject-object relation that defines self and other as it perceives things in its own world, which is why it is called the Self. The relation that defines the subject-object relation of self and other is the perception of things by the Self. That presence of consciousness always carries with itself its own sense of being present, which is called I Am. That presence of consciousness always

exists in the present moment, which is why it has to focus its attention on the present moment to become aware of itself. You bring yourself to the doorway when you focus your attention on your own sense of being present as the Self in the present moment.

The problem of delusion arises when that presence of consciousness identifies itself with its mentally constructed, body-based, emotionally energized, personal self-concept, which is called the ego. Delusion arises when the Self identifies itself with its ego. The self-concept is always constructed in terms of a personal self-image that is emotionally related to the image of some other thing the Self perceives in its world. The self-image is body-based, which is another thing that the Self perceives in its world, but when the Self identifies itself with its ego, the Self believes that it is its body, which Nisargadatta calls the I-am-the-body-idea. When the Self identifies itself with its ego, the Self believes that its existence is dependent on the survival of its body in the world it perceives. Believing that your existence as a presence of consciousness is dependent on the survival of your body in the world you perceive is the essence of delusion.

Why does the Self believe this false belief about itself? The problem is the Self feels emotionally self-limited to the emotionally animated form of its body when it perceives the expression of self-limiting emotions that animate the form of the body. Self-limiting emotions are always expressed in an emotional relationship that relates the personal self-image to the image of some other thing as the self-concept is emotionally constructed in the mind. The Self emotionally identifies itself with its ego when it feels emotionally self-limited to the form of its body. That's why the Self believes its existence depends on the survival of its body. Self-limiting emotions are survival emotions that are always expressed in defense of the survival of the body. That's the nature of expressing fear and desire. You're defending the survival of your body as though your existence depends upon it. That's the core false belief at the center of delusion.

Delusion is only possible because you are not aware of your Self as a presence of consciousness that exists in the present moment. You are not aware of your Self because your attention is totally focused on your self-concept, which is always an emotional projection into the past or future. You can only construct a personal self-concept when a personal self-image is constructed out of the memory of past events or the anticipation of future events. You have to make an emotional projection to the past or future to construct a personal body-based self-image out of the memory of the past or the anticipation of the future. That emotional projection is why you're not focused on the present moment, which is where you actually exist. Your attention is focused on an illusory self-concept that only appears to exist in a nonexistent past or future. When you identify your Self with this illusory body-based self-concept, you falsely believe that your existence depends on the survival of your body in the world you perceive.

If your existence does not depend on the survival of the body, then what does it depend on? The answer is the Source of the Self. Metaphorically speaking, the Source can be described as an undivided and unlimited, motionless ocean of consciousness. The Self, as an individual center of perceiving consciousness, has to divide itself from the undivided ocean. The Self always arises at the central point of view of its own world. The Self perceives that world from its central point of view. That world is like a virtual reality as images of that world are projected from a surrounding screen to the central point of view of the Self. The Self projects those images as it focuses its attention on that world by illuminating that world with the light of consciousness. The Self also animates that world with the energy of its motion as a moving point of perceiving consciousness.

This moving point of illuminating and perceiving consciousness is divided from the motionless ocean of consciousness when the world the Self perceives appears to come into existence. Enlightenment happens when the Self returns to its Source, which is the ocean of consciousness. That return is described as a dissolution, like a drop of water that dissolves back into the ocean.

The first step in becoming enlightened is knowing yourself to be the Self. You have to focus your attention on your own sense of being present as a presence of perceiving consciousness that only exists in the present moment. That's the only true thing you can ever know about your Self. Everything else you think you know about your Self is delusional and is emotionally constructed as false beliefs you believe about your Self. Those false beliefs are the nature of your ego, which is your mentally constructed, body-based, emotionally energized, personal self-concept. Knowing yourself to be the Self is only possible when you destroy those false beliefs you believe about your Self. You have to destroy your ego at the level of a personal self-concept.

The final step in becoming enlightened is passing through the gateless gate. You first bring your Self to the doorway by focusing your attention on your own sense of being present as a presence of consciousness that only exists in the present moment, and then you finally pass through the doorway. You pass through the doorway when the Self becomes selfless. The Self only becomes selfless when it becomes desireless, which is only possible when the ego is destroyed. When the Self becomes selfless and desireless, it also becomes motionless. That's when the Self dissolves back into the undivided and unlimited, motionless ocean of consciousness. Individual being dissolves back into undivided being like a drop of water that dissolves into the ocean.

Before any of this can happen, you have to become selfless and desireless, which means you have to destroy your ego. The way you destroy your ego is through a process of surrender and detachment. You surrender when you give up the desire to be in control of things. That's how you stop defending the survival of your ego. You detach

yourself when you sever your emotional attachment to things. The emotional relationships that relate the personal self-concept to the concept of other things are only constructed out of the emotional energy of self-defensive emotions and emotional attachments. When you surrender and sever emotional attachments, you take the emotional energy out of that emotional construction of the ego. Without that emotional energy that relates the concept of self to the concept of another, the emotional relationships between self and other fall apart. That's how the ego is deconstructed and eventually destroyed.

It may help to tell a short personal story. I had never heard the term nonduality until I was in a romantic relationship with a woman I'll call JC. JC was interested in the paranormal aspects of psychology, and had a copy of Jed McKenna's first book on Spiritual Enlightenment, which she thought was funny. At her suggestion, I read the book and became fascinated with the concept of nonduality. There was something about this concept that I just couldn't dismiss out-of-hand as being unscientific. This fascination would eventually lead to my understanding of nonduality in scientific terms along the lines of the holographic principle of quantum gravity, which I was only able to put together after I read Amanda Geffer's book *Trespassing on Einstein's Lawn*.

My relationship with JC was important for another reason. It was in this relationship that I first experienced surrender and detachment. JC was in conflict with herself. She wanted a romantic relationship, but she was also afraid of being controlled in that relationship the way her father controlled her in childhood. She was in awe of her father as an intellectual man who inspired her own intellectual life, but she was also afraid of him due to his tendency to control her. The more I tried to get close to JC, which I knew she wanted, the more she pushed me away due to her fear of being controlled. This led me to try to force myself on her, which sent her into a panic.

We ended up seeing a therapist who was very insightful and almost immediately pointed out to me in a very unkind way that I was being selfish and immature like a child that wants to control his mother in order to force his mother to satisfy his desires. My desire to control JC was also futile since she didn't want to be controlled and resisted all my attempts to control her. When I clearly saw the selfishness, immaturity and futility of my actions, it was like my whole world collapsed down on top of me. Almost instantaneously, I gave up my desire to control JC, and when that happened, I also severed my emotional attachment to her.

Am I recommending that you sever your emotional attachment to your wife when you feel frustrated? Absolutely not. I can recommend you enter into a state of surrender in which you stop trying to control things, accept things as they are, and allow things to play out in the normal way. If you can do that, then you won't feel frustrated anymore.

When I severed my emotional attachment to JC, I saw how I was trying to control her behavior to force her to satisfy my own desires. I saw the immaturity of my desire to control her, like a baby that wants to control its mother. I saw the futility of my desire to control her since she didn't want to be controlled and would always resist my attempts to control her. I severed my emotional attachment to her when I gave up my desire to control her. Giving up the desire to be in control is a surrender. I had to give up my desire to be in control before I could sever my emotional attachment to her and let go. Severing emotional attachments can only go forward in a state of surrender in which the desire to be in control is given up. When I severed my emotional attachment to her it felt like something died inside of me. What died was a part of my ego.

The reason I'm telling this story is because surrender and detachment is the only way the ego can be deconstructed and eventually destroyed. That's the only way you can become selfless and desireless. You have to become selfless before the Self can pass through the gateless gate. The Self has to become desireless and motionless before the Self can dissolve back into its Source, like a drop of water that dissolves into the ocean.

To be clear about things, I'm not recommending that you become enlightened. This is a decision you have to make for your Self. As Jed McKenna says, the price of truth is everything. The process of becoming enlightened is a war you fight with yourself to destroy your Self. When the Self is destroyed, who wins? When you refuse to play the game, you're out of the game, which means the game disappears from existence, but so too does the player of the game. When you become enlightened, you lose everything, including your own Self. You have to seriously ask your Self, do you really want to trade in everything you have, including your own sense of Self, and receive nothing in return? Do you want to be nothing, do nothing and know nothing?

The only real purpose of what I'm doing here is to understand spiritual enlightenment in scientific terms. I'm translating the concept of nonduality into scientific concepts. Modern physics with its holographic principle of quantum gravity goes a long way in terms of making that translation. The holographic principle tells us the perceivable world we appear to live in is like a computer-generated virtual reality. Images of that virtual reality are forms of information that are projected from a holographic screen to the point of view of an observer. The holographic screen arises as an event horizon in the observer's accelerated frame of reference. The accelerated observer is a moving point of perceiving consciousness. The energy of that motion is what animates the projected images of the observer's world. That energy arises through a geometric mechanism, like the accelerated expansion of space that expands relative to the observer's central point of view. The energy of the expansion of space is called dark energy, which gives rise to a cosmic horizon that surrounds the observer's central point of view and acts as a holographic screen. The observer's holographic screen encodes quantized bits of information, called qubits, through some other kind of geometric mechanism, like

non-commutative geometry. In effect, the laws of physics are nothing more than the operating system or computational rules that govern the operation of this computer-generated virtual reality.

Every observer observes the projected and animated images of its own holographic world defined by the information encoded on its holographic screen and the energy inherent in its accelerated frame of reference. A consensual reality shared by many observers, each of which is present at its own point of view, becomes possible when those holographic screens overlap in the sense of Venn diagram and share information. This is just like the kind of information sharing we see in a computer-generated virtual reality game when each player of the game plays its own game on its own computer screen. There is information sharing between different players when their computer screens are connected by the internet. When a player decides to stop playing the game and turns off its computer screen, the game disappears from existence from the point of view of that particular player. That's basically what happens when you become enlightened. You refuse to play the game. You withdraw your attention away from the game.

When you withdraw your attention away from the game, you withdraw your investment of emotional energy in the game that animates your character in the game. You also stop illuminating the game with the light of consciousness and stop projecting and animating the images of the game. That's how you become selfless, desireless, and motionless. You bring your Self to the doorway of the Self as you focus attention on your own sense of being present. You pass through the doorway as you become selfless, desireless, and motionless. In the language of modern theoretical physics, you enter into an ultimate freely falling frame of reference in which there is no holographic screen. That's when the world you perceive disappears from existence. That's when you fall into the void. That's when your individual being returns to and dissolves into the undivided being of the void. That's when you stop being a Self.

Hi J,

Your outlook on enlightening doesn't sound like a sales pitch if the end result is just an annihilation of what I believe I am. "Nothingness" doesn't sound like bliss or Nirvana, so I'm not sure if I'm ready for this. Bernadette Roberts speaks about a unitive state where you feel a sacred oneness, but according to your (and her) description, that's not the final step of the enlightenment process, but just an intermediate step until the entire notion of Self is no longer existent.

Your scientific description is a quite fascinating read, although I probably haven't understood half of it :) Amanda Geffer's book was a challenge, too, since I completely

lack the physics background. But I like the idea that you are trying to reconcile spirituality and science. That's what brought me to you in the first place.

I have purchased Jean Dunn's "Prior to Consciousness" as per your bibliography. I'm sure I'll find a few more answers there, although communicating with you was probably better than any book I read. So thanks again for the time you spent with me to describe your point of view, I greatly appreciate it.

Hi Martin

Your assessment of enlightenment is correct. The only good part of becoming enlightened is what you call the intermediate state, which Jed McKenna calls the integrated state and Bernadette Roberts calls the mystical union of the Self with God. You don't have to destroy your Self to be integrated. You just have to bring yourself into alignment with the expression of divine will, which I prefer to call the normal flow of things. This is where surrender comes into play. When you express your personally biased individual will, you're only interfering with the normal flow of things and making things worse for yourself. You're creating an emotional disturbance in the normal of things. McKenna says the ultimate state has nothing to recommend it. McKenna recommends the integrated state for everybody and the ultimate state for nobody.

It's worth discussing the nature of the integrated state in some detail. The normal flow of things does not mean that things are predetermined. There is always potentiality in the way things play out. In the language of modern theoretical physics, the computer-generated virtual reality is not governed by a classical computer but by a quantum computer, and there is always potentiality in the way events play out in the virtual reality. Potentiality is built into the operation of the quantum computer. You always have a choice in terms of what you'll experience in the virtual reality as you focus your attention on things. That's why you can express an intent, and as long as that intent is not self-limited and personally biased, the potentiality of the virtual reality will make that intent into an actuality. The intent has to be unbiased and best for all involved. You also have to focus your attention on expressing and manifesting that intent. You have to work to manifest that intent as you focus your time and energy on its manifestation. When you focus your attention in this way, you're redirecting the normal flow of things to manifest the intent. Potentiality is becoming an actuality, which is pretty much guaranteed to happen as long as the intent is not selfish and personally biased and is expressed in a way that is best for all involved.

Expression of potentiality is the reason expressions of creativity are possible. The computer generated virtual reality is a holographic world constructed through the creation of geometry. The Source of that world, which we call the void, has the potentiality to create geometry. That is the ultimate source of all creativity. Both

information and energy are geometrically created. When you enter into the integrated state, you automatically partake of that expression of creativity. Wherever you are right now, you have the potential to redirect the normal flow of things by expressing a pure, unbiased, unconflicted intent, and you can end up wherever you want to be as long as that desire is not selfish and personally biased. Expressing creativity and manifesting desires is an inherent aspect of the integrated state. Right actions and feelings of connection are also inherent aspects of the integrated state when you allow yourself to come into alignment with the normal flow of things. To feel disconnected and express wrong actions, you have to create an emotional disturbance in the normal flow of things by expressing personally biased individual will, which you do as your focus of attention becomes personally biased.

When you become firmly established in the integrated state, you no longer know yourself to be a person. You can only know yourself to be a presence of consciousness at the center of your own world. That's the inherent nature of the death-rebirth transformation that happens when you surrender to divine will. You die in identity to the body and are reborn of the spirit.

The potentiality you experience as you focus your attention on things in the virtual reality is the reason you can become enlightened. As you express this potentiality, what you are really doing is playing a virtual reality game. Everything you experience in the virtual reality game is a choice you make as you focus your attention on things. You always have the choice to withdraw your attention away from the game and stop playing the game. Becoming enlightened and entering the ultimate state is the end result of your refusal to play the game. When you are totally out of the game, you experience nothing, which is why McKenna says the ultimate state has nothing to recommend it and why the Buddha stated he attained nothing from total enlightenment.

Postscript

Hi Martin

I wrote up all of our communications as an article, which is attached to this email. I recommend you read through these answers again, as I find that they answer all of your questions, at least well enough to be comprehended at a conceptual level. Sometimes you have to read the answers several times before they finally sink in and make sense. I know that's been my own experience. I had to read the Jed McKenna books and I Am That by Nisargadatta several times before I really understood what they were describing and could correlate this description with the holographic principle, which allowed me to understand the whole thing at a scientific level. Even without the holographic principle it's possible to understand what's going on here as long as you understand the world as a holographic virtual reality, similar to the Matrix. The key thing is to understand that

your consciousness is not a result of your brain activity. Your thoughts are a result of your brain activity. Your brain and your thoughts are just another aspect of the holographic world that you perceive. You can only know yourself to be the perceiver of that world, which is the consciousness present at the central point of view of that world. Images of that world are being displayed on a screen, just like in a computer-generated virtual reality. The only true thing you can ever know about yourself is your own sense of being present as you perceive the projected and animated images of that world. The images constantly change, but your sense of being present is always the same. If you want to awaken, either within or from the dream, you have to ignore the images and focus your attention only on your own being.

Hi J

Thanks again for the summary. Maybe you should consider giving Satsangs about awakening. I think the toughest part is to discriminate between the egoic self and the knowing of being a present consciousness. If I focus my attention inwards, I can't tell which is which. And the more I try to think about it, the more confused I get. My latest attempt is to focus on the experience of just feeling alive and stay with it during meditation. And if you ask me what it is like to feel alive, I just couldn't tell you, but it's self-evident. This is my current Sadhana.

Hi Martin

When you were in kindergarten and the teacher called your name, you answered "present". That's the sense of being present I'm referring to. Whatever you perceive, including the events of your own life, you are always present to perceive those events. To awaken, you have to externalize yourself from the events of your own life and see that life with a sense of distance and detachment, like a movie that you're watching. The key step in awakening is this process of externalization that discriminates your being from your life. Whatever appears to happen in the movie of your own life, you're always present as the perceiver of the movie. The events of your life are constantly changing, but your sense of being present is always the same. Your sense of being present has truth in it, but the events of your life do not. This process of externalizing yourself from the events of your life and discriminating the true from the false is inherently a process of detachment. Only the true nature of your Self, which is nothing more than a presence of consciousness at the central point of view of your own world, has its own inherent spiritual being. Nisargadatta says *timeless being is entirely in the Now*. The true nature of your spiritual being always exists now, in the present moment. When you are present, you can experience that spiritual being even as you perceive the events of your own life and world, which is an awakening within the dream. When you are not present and perceive nothing, you can dissolve back into the undivided and unlimited nothingness of that timeless being, which is an awakening from the dream.

Seeing the false as false is meditation.

Meditation is discriminating the true from the false.

Discrimination will lead to detachment. You gain nothing. You leave behind what is not your own and find what you have never lost: Your own being-Nisargadatta Maharaj

The true nature of what you are is a spiritual being, which is called *I Am*. You are not a physical being. Your physical body or life-form is like a garment or costume that you wear. You are the spiritual being that is wearing the costume. The costume wears out when the body dies, but the spiritual being never dies because it has timeless being. It does not exist in time. Your physical body, your thoughts, your memories and your emotions are all a part of the costume. Your costume and your entire world all exist in time, but your spiritual being does not. When your body dies, you still exist as a spiritual being. Your world is like a virtual reality movie that you're watching, and your costume is like the central character of the movie. You're totally immersed in the movie because the movie is a virtual reality. It is a total VR. In reality, you are only the watcher of the movie.

The only true thing you can ever know about yourself is your own sense of being present as the perceiver of the movie, the sense of I-Am-ness, the sense of beingness and presence. That sense of being present is where you have to focus your attention to the exclusion of everything else you can perceive. You have to bring yourself into focus and know yourself to be a presence of consciousness at the center of the world you perceive that exists now, in the present moment. You have to be with yourself and center yourself. You have to become aware of your own beingness and presence to the exclusion of everything else you can perceive. You do that by seeing the world you perceive as an illusion, like a movie that you're watching, and losing interest in watching the movie. You have to withdraw your attention away from the movie and refocus your attention on your own sense of being present. You do that when you surrender and enter into a state of present moment awareness. You accept everything as it is and give up your desire to control things and have power over things. You accept everything as it is because it's all an expression of God's will and is for the best. You give up your desire to control things when you accept everything as it is with no desire that anything be any different that it appears to be in the movie. You see the movie as an illusion and lose interest in trying to direct the events in the movie. Your desire to be in control and have power over things is self-defensive because you're trying to defend the survival of your character in the movie. Your desire to be in control and have power over things is a denial of death as you try to push your fear of death away and keep it unconscious.

You give up that desire to be in control when you surrender and give up your personal bias in the focus of your attention that expresses itself as self-defensive individual will. You do that because you see that you are only defending the survival of an illusion of

what you are and that the true nature of your being and existence does not depend on the survival of your character in the illusion. The key aspect of surrender is that when you surrender you accept death as a natural part of life. When you surrender, you come to see that your spiritual existence does not depend on the survival of your character in the movie you're watching, and you accept the death of your character as a natural part of the movie. That's when you stop defending the survival of your character as though your existence depends on it. When you surrender and accept everything as it appears to be each moment you bring yourself into a state of present moment awareness within which your attention is only focused on the events of the present moment. In that state of present moment awareness, you turn your attention away from the events of the world you perceive because you see those events are an illusion, you lose interest in paying attention to that illusion, and you refocus your attention on your own sense of being present as the perceiver of the illusion. You sever your emotional attachment to the life your character appears to live in the illusion when you see that life as an illusion of what you really are and lose interest in paying attention to that illusion.

When you withdraw your attention away from the life your character appears to live in the illusion, you also withdraw your investment of emotional energy in that life that animates that life, which is how you sever your emotional attachment to your character. Your character becomes dead to you when you stop caring about the life your character appears to live in the illusion and stop emotionally animating that life. You become willing to do nothing at a personal level. You see that life as an illusion of what you are and lose interest in paying attention to the illusion. You have to become interested only in discovering the true nature of what you really are. That's when you can turn your attention away from the illusion, look within, and refocus your attention on your own sense of being present as the perceiver of the illusion. That's where you have to stabilize the focus of your attention. You have to bring yourself into focus, center yourself, be with yourself and know yourself to be a presence of consciousness at the center of the world you perceive that exists now, in the present moment. You have to stabilize the focus of your attention on your own affectionate feeling-sense of being present. That sense of being present, that affectionate feeling-sense of I-Am-ness, that affectionate feeling-sense of beingness and presence, is where you have to focus your attention to the exclusion of everything else you can perceive if you are to awaken.

The flip side of focusing your attention only on your own affectionate feeling-sense of being present as the perceiver of your own world to the exclusion of everything else you can perceive in that world is the process of externalizing and depersonalizing yourself. You have to externalize your own being from all the events that appear to occur in that world as your character appears to live a life in that world. The way you externalize your own being from the life your character appears to live in the world you perceive is by severing your emotional attachment to your character. That's why you have to become

willing to do nothing and die at a personal level as you stop emotionally animating the life of your character. You have to stop caring about the life your character appears to live in the world you perceive. Your character has to become dead to you. That's how you sever your emotional attachment to your character and externalize yourself. That's the only way you can separate and externalize your own being from the life your character appears to live in the world you perceive. You have to become willing to die and do nothing at a personal level. You can only externalize yourself as you sever your emotional attachment to the life your character appears to live in the world you perceive.

Hi J

I have re-read Jed McKenna's book, and he speaks of spiritual autolysis to destroy the ego. I have the impression that he's not an advocate of the "being aware of awareness" approach.

Given that Jed McKenna is a pseudonym, I wonder if this is a book that should be taken seriously (although it's an interesting read).

Hi Martin

In the neo-Advaita literature you will find the expression "being-consciousness-bliss", which Nisargadatta describes as the process of focusing your attention on your own affectionate feeling-sense of being present (the sense I-Am, see chapter 16, pages 47-53 of I Am That). McKenna describes this as "bringing yourself into focus". The Self that you're bringing into focus is a presence of consciousness. You are that presence of consciousness that exists now, in the present moment, at the center of your own world. You're aware of your own sense of being present as the perceiver of your own world as you perceive that world. That world is just like a virtual reality movie that's being displayed on a computer screen. This isn't just the testimony of enlightened beings (beginning with Plato and extending through Nisargadatta and McKenna), but is also the natural conclusion of theoretical physics (as was concluded by Amanda Geffer in her book about the holographic principle). The flip side of bringing yourself into focus (as you focus on your own sense of being present as the perceiver of your own world), and knowing yourself to be a presence of consciousness at the central point of view of that world, is the process of externalizing yourself from everything you can perceive in that world, including your character (avatar) in the virtual reality movie you're watching. Your character is the central character of that movie, which is the central form of information that appears in the virtual reality and which is always emotionally animated relative to all other forms that appear in the virtual reality. You're only confused about what you really are because you're emotionally identifying yourself with your character due to your perception of feelings of emotional self-limitation to the form of your character that arise as that personal form is emotionally animated relative to all other forms. That's the

nature of personal self-identification. When McKenna talks about destroying the ego (spiritual autolysis) he only refers to the process of emotional detachment that takes that emotional energy out of the mental construction of that personal self-identity. You sever your emotional attachment to your character when you stop expressing that emotional energy. You do that when you see your character as an illusion of what you really are, lose interest in paying attention to that illusion, and withdraw your attention away from the illusion, thereby withdrawing your investment of emotional energy in the illusion that animates the life of your character. That withdrawal of emotional energy is how you sever the emotional attachment and destroy your ego. In the process of severing your emotional attachment to your character, you externalize yourself and depersonalize yourself. You stop emotionally identifying yourself with your character. In this process of externalization, you see your character as no more real than an animated character in a movie that you're watching. You see this from a higher level of consciousness, which is the idea of the ascension of consciousness to a higher level that both Nisargadatta and McKenna (not to mention Plato) speak about. The practice of focusing your attention on your own sense of being present as the perceiver your own world (to the exclusion of everything else you can perceive in that world) is the flip side of the same coin of externalizing and depersonalizing yourself as you emotionally detach yourself from your character and see the life your character appears to live in that world from a higher level of consciousness, like a movie that you're only watching. The two processes of bringing yourself into focus and externalizing yourself go together hand-in-hand. Ultimately, when you totally withdraw your attention away from the world you perceive, while firmly focusing your attention on your own sense of being present as the perceiver of that world, that world disappears from existence from your own point of view and the individual consciousness and being of your Self (present at the central point of view of your own world) dissolves back into the undifferentiated consciousness and timeless being of No-self (the void) like a drop of water that dissolves back into the ocean. That's the nature of passing through the gateless gate and becoming spiritually enlightened.

There's one last interesting point that can be scientifically understood in terms of the holographic principle. The illusion of time is only created because the point of view of the Self is undergoing accelerated motion relative to the motionless void. That's how an observer's event horizon is constructed that becomes the observer's holographic screen when qubits of information are encoded on the horizon. The observer's character in this constructed holographic virtual reality world is a form of information that can be reduced to qubits of information encoded on the screen, just like in a computer-generated virtual reality world that's being displayed on a computer screen, but unlike a classical computer network, this is a quantum computer network. The emotional energy that animates the observer's character can be understood in terms of the energy of the observer's own accelerated motion. When that accelerated motion comes to an end in an ultimate state of free-fall, the observer's holographic world disappears from existence

since the observer no longer has an event horizon that acts as its holographic screen. When the expression of that flow of energy comes to an end, the course of time also comes to an end. This naturally happens when the observer's own accelerated motion comes to an end relative to the motionless void, which occurs as the observer totally withdraws its attention away from the holographic world that it perceives, thereby withdrawing its investment of energy in that world. Passing through the gateless gate can only occur in an ultimate state of free-fall. Once spiritual enlightenment occurs, it becomes possible to see how the illusion of a holographic world is created. Not only is that world seen like a virtual reality movie that is being displayed on a computer screen and is being observed by an observer at the central point of view of that world, but the motion of the observer relative to the motionless void is also seen as the nature of the energy that constructs and animates that world as the surface of the observer's event horizon arises that displays all the animated images of that world, just like a computer screen. The observer's event horizon is a bounding surface of space that arises within the void and acts as a holographic screen, which is like a surface of the ocean. The images of that holographic world are being displayed on the screen and are animated in the flow of energy that arises from the observer's own motion. When that motion comes to an end, that animation also comes to an end, which is how the course of time comes to an end when that flow of energy comes to an end. Also seen is how the images of that holographic world are projected from the observer's own screen to its point of view due to the illuminating effect of the light of consciousness that emanates from the observer's own point of view, just like the light of a movie projector that projects the animated images of a movie from a movie screen to the point of view of an observer. The illuminating effect of the light of consciousness, which projects the images, arises as the observer focuses its attention on the events of its own holographic world. When the observer withdraws its attention away from the events of that world, it also withdraws the illuminating effect of the light of consciousness away from that world. That world disappears from existence from the observer's own point of view when the light of consciousness is turned off and that world is no longer illuminated. The bottom line is that the observer's own world disappears from existence from its own point of view when that world is no longer illuminated or animated, which can only occur as the observer withdraws its attention away from that world. That's when individual being is able to dissolve back into undivided timeless being. Once spiritual enlightenment occurs, all of this is seen from the emptiness, silence, stillness and darkness of the void.

If you carefully read Nisargadatta, Osho and McKenna, along with the Bhagavad Gita, Plato, the Tao Te Ching, Chuang Tzu, and the Ten Bulls of Zen, this whole incredible scenario is described by enlightened beings in exquisite detail. There are also elements of it in the Bible, especially the Book of Genesis, and in the Vedas. It's amazing that the holographic principle is able to confirm this ancient knowledge at a scientific level.

Even the affectionate feeling of being present or the bliss of being-consciousness-bliss can be understood in terms of the holographic principle. That affectionate feeling comes from feelings of connection you perceive as you allow the flow of energy through your own world and your own motion as a point of consciousness to come into alignment. Your own motion as a point of consciousness underlies all your emotional expressions. When you feel connected, your own motion as a presence of consciousness at the central point of view of your own world is coming into alignment with the normal flow of things through that world. Your willingness to come into alignment and feel connected is always a surrender to God's will. You experience that connectedness as you focus your attention on your own sense of being that presence of consciousness while allowing yourself to feel connected. That's when the light of consciousness is in its purest state. You become aware of that light and love as you feel connected to all things.

The big question is why? Why does any of this happen? It's common to say that life is but a dream: *Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream, merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.* The better answer is to say life is but a game. Life is a virtual reality game that you're playing, like the kind of virtual reality games that are displayed on a computer screen. Why are you playing the game? Why did you create the game? The answer is it's all a spontaneous expression of creativity. Children create and play games in order to amuse themselves. Children create and play games for no other reason than their amusement and as a spontaneous expression of their creativity. The only purpose of the game is to amuse yourself. Inherent in the game is a joke. You're playing a joke on yourself: *There must be some way out of here, said the Joker to the Thief; there's too much confusion, I can't get no relief. No reason to get excited, the Thief he kindly spoke; there are many here among us who feel life is but a joke. But you and I, we've been through that and this is not our fate; so let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late.* Life is a joke that you're playing on yourself as you play the game. The joke you play on yourself is your emotional self-identification with your character in the game. Spiritual enlightenment amounts to nothing more than your refusal to play the game: *When you refuse to play the game, you're out of it.* That's the only way you can stop emotionally identifying yourself with your character in the game. That's why it's common for enlightened beings to have a good laugh about the whole thing after they become enlightened. All you can do after you're done is laugh about the whole thing.

Hi J

Thanks again for your email. I'm still digesting what you were saying, but the whole notion of the world being like a video game is difficult to grasp, especially in times of personal struggles.

Hi Martin

Think of your personal struggles in terms of your emotional attachments. Life is hard because it's based on the pleasure-pain principle, which underlies the whole idea of Darwinian evolution, natural selection and the survival of the fittest body. The key thing to understand is that the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, which are emotionally expressed as fear and desire, only apply at the level of the body. You are not the body. Personal suffering only indicates an unwillingness to let go and move on. The way you overcome personal suffering is through surrender, which ultimately is the acceptance of death, and by severing your emotional attachments. Surrender and detachment are essential aspects of how you bring your own spiritual being into focus. This may seem like harsh advice when you're emotionally identifying yourself with your body, but there is no other advice that leads to spiritual liberation.

The other thing to be clear about is that body death is not required for spiritual liberation. Body death can even be seen as an obstacle to spiritual liberation in the sense of reincarnation. Only ego death, which is the death of the mentally constructed, emotionally energized, body-based, personal self-concept is required for spiritual liberation. Even spiritual enlightenment, which is the ultimate state of awakening from the dream, is not required for spiritual liberation. Spiritual liberation occurs at an intermediate level when you awaken within the dream. That's when you clearly see that your body is only like the central character that appears in a virtual reality movie that you're watching from your own point of view outside the movie as that virtual reality world is displayed on a movie screen. Seeing that is itself spiritual liberation.

Once you realize that there is nothing in this world which you can call your own, you look at it from the outside as you look at a play on the stage or a picture on the screen. To know the picture as the play of light on the screen gives freedom from the idea that the picture is real. In reality I only look. Whatever is done is done on the stage.

Joy and sorrow, life and death, they are real to the man in bondage.

To me they are all in the show, as unreal as the show itself.

Nisargadatta Maharaj