

FALLING FOR TRUTH

By

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(sample chapters)

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CHAPTER 2- SEEKING

What Do You Know?

“One cannot know God, until one knows the self who is seeking for God. You must be prepared to find What Is, not that which you wish to find, even if it is oblivion.” (Richard Rose)

Something is wrong...desperately wrong. You feel it. You may not be sure what: yourself, your life circumstances, your family, society, the world, the planet, the universe... something. The way you have been told to believe about things just does not hold water. There is a crack in the container, and even if you can't see the leak, you sense that what is leaking away is your life force, your vitality, perhaps even your very soul. That is why you are seeking. You have questions. The problem is that there are not many real answers around.

Only promises.

I don't have a lot of answers either, but I do have a few “anti-answers.” Any type of truth is found by searching for what is untrue. Then removing it. At the end, whatever cannot be further removed, is What Is. No matter how odd, shocking or pleasant the remainder.

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So what then is a spiritual search? That should be a primary question. By definition anyone seeking is looking for something. The problem is that most on a spiritual search already believe they know what the end result is or will be. Usually it is pictured or imagined to be something warm and happy. Love, bliss, perfection, control, importance, power, immortality. But a self motivated search towards feeling better is not the same as one for answers.

“Of course, if most are honest about it, the start for anyone was not looking for God or some high ideal or condition, but to get away from deep discontent and pain. Thus the spiritual path will really begin when someone finally gets tired of trying to get something better “over there” and instead tries to look closely at what it is we are attempting to flee.” (Eddie Traversa)

Spiritual seeking usually occurs as a bargaining. And the bargaining tends to take on a familiar, self-centered tone. For example, if we become nice, peaceful and wise, the universe will give us what we want. In other words, simply another tool to get cars, houses, or relationships. One of the key reasons that teachers say seeking is a problem is because people on the deepest level, still habitually seek to obtain some sort of material reward or fulfill some personal egoic want.

Seeking by default becomes a means of distraction away from the very thing that they need to look at.

We need to keep turning the attention back on ourself, to ask why we are doing what we are doing. That is why the spiritual search will not really begin until we are no longer able to run away from ourselves. Everyone wants it to start with a wonderful vision or inspiring feeling- but a real spiritual journey tends not to begin until some great loss, suffering or disappointment is infused with our existence. The actual moment of beginning to study ancient wisdom teachings started in 1997 (as will be discussed later) but the path first began to be walked in 1994. That is when a former girlfriend was murdered in what became a high profile Canadian homicide case. A friend called me just before 6 PM to warn me of what I was about to see as the lead story of the news. I recall standing there in silent shock, as I watched the story of someone so meaningful to me being revealed as tragically ended. I zoned out for a few hours. My mind was processing.

Something changed in those moments. Her death began the shattering of a whole host of fairy tales I had been holding onto without even realizing it. One had been the belief that if you worked hard, gained some university degrees, and were a relatively nice person, that some force would then provide you with good life. But suddenly - one of the brightest, kindest and most beautiful people I had known had been cut down at 23. The inner beliefs I held could not hold up to the actual experience of chaotic reality. A reality in which it was obvious how those beliefs did not determine anyone's success or failure. What did determine these things? Inner Exploration had exploded unexpectedly within.

However there was no reading of spiritual texts, and no meditating. In other words, nothing that would be classified by the spiritual community as "spiritual" took place. All that happened was an intense, deep inner questioning of so many long-held hopes and beliefs. That which I have just described, is a big part of the search; and it is the part that is generally ignored by just about everyone on the path.

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"In order to be effective, truth must penetrate like an arrow, and that is likely to hurt." (Wu Wei Wu)

It is about 7 PM. The seats are slowly filling. What am I doing here? I could have lied and said I was busy, but here I am. "Here" is a satsang talk given by one of the big

names in the spiritual world, a favourite of a good friend of mine who asked me to come with her. I am always excited by the possibility of hearing someone speak who is rooted in knowing. Yet actually finding one is like getting asked to play a round of golf at Augusta National- a lucky break. There are about sixty people in the room, mostly sitting and smiling. There don't seem to be many 'rookies' here like me.

“Are you excited?” my friend asks me.

“About what?”

“Being here, to hear this talk.”

“Indubiously,” to paraphrase Michael Scott of *The Office*.

I am sitting on the end seat of the row, to have the possibility of an easy getaway. I am not writing about this event to show how much I know, but to get all of us to ask, how much do the people we are trusting to be our spiritual guides know? One of the fastest growing businesses in the west is spirituality. The woman I am waiting to hear tonight just had a four-day, \$500 retreat. Sixty people attended. That is \$30,000 for those of you doing the math at home. Good work for a weekend if you can get it. However, if you make awakening a business, then you need a product to sell. Is what is sold what is True, or just what people will buy? What is the Truth anyway?

Truth is a big word. Everyone has truth- my truth, your truth, etc. However, these small “t” truths about how to live life are based on individual perceptions and views. As a result, they are really beliefs. Perhaps a strong emotional belief, but a belief none-the-less. Yet Truth is not about believing, or even knowing or understanding. You become Truth. Truth is not somewhere over there, nor do we have to figure out how to get over there to have it. Truth is right here. So instead of moving anywhere, we must turn our awareness around to finally perceive it. Truth is not Truth until there is no separation from it. One knows Awakening not when they become Awake, but when all the only thing perceived is Awakeness.

Awakening, especially for Westerners with money, has been presented as compassion, love, unity, happiness, no mind, and a dubious host of states supposedly containing no more problems. It has also been fused into a mindset of acquisition, like so many other things that I can get (like a raise, Porsche, or new boobs) that will make my life better. But for centuries there has been another, though less popular message: that Awakening is simply the revelation that there is only One. *“If you seek with a perfect seeking, then you shall know the good that is in you; thus you will know yourself as well, it is apprehended by that One, and by the very one who is comprehended.”*¹ Not as in we are all connected or unity. But One. Absolute. No second – thus, no time or space. There is no “we” in One. There is no “me” in One. It is the shocking realization that there is not a higher self, child self, true self, better self-

1 Allogenes

but no self. The Buddhist term Nirvana does not mean happy, it actually means cessation or obliteration. Suffering ends when it is realized there is no one to suffer. "Me" and "the world" are illusionary. So WHO is going to improve by buying what this seller is selling? Shouldn't that be a fundamental question? Yet, paradoxically, at the same time there must be no ignoring the world or our challenges therein (illusionary or not). For to do so (which is called spiritual bypassing) can be just as destructive as completely focusing on the material world exclusively.

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"Truly I have attained nothing from total enlightenment." Buddha

All are equal (a rock, a tree, an unseen entity, me or you). When I finally understood why everything was equal, then at last, I was able to get somewhere. However, I also found there was nowhere to go! The price of truth is everything, as the saying goes. However, no one really knows what everything is until they are at the toll both and have to pay it. Truth is available to you right now, where you are, no matter your current situation. Are you willing to take the step forward? What is make this tougher is that, generally, taking a step forward never seems like it is happening while it is happening. Instead it often seems like we are taking two steps back.

I was what Castaneda called "Touched by the Nagual" (when the Spirit manifests and descends upon us unexpectedly) the first time in 1997. It took me years to understand what this phrase meant. Yet I assure you, there was no forgetting the event, as well as the feeling that sent me searching for something more. It was March 1997, around the time of my twenty-eighth birthday. At the time I had little idea of spiritual matters. I had graduated university in 1993 after taking a year off for a business failure and family upheaval. Then after Joan's murder, after taking a year off for a business failure and family upheaval. Then following Joan's murder, I ran away for a year to Australia- only to return to Canada in 1995 to suffer two more years of trying to be a comedian in Toronto. Nothing in my life was bringing me any joy. All my "titles" and "identities" were powerless. I found, worst of all, that I was getting meaner and more manipulative. My relationships had gone from bad to worse. I treated the last woman I had been dating (Diane), as well as one of my best friends (Holly) so poorly that I wondered "what has happened to me?" Everywhere I turned I saw people who looked stressed out and unhappy. I myself was broke and angry. I was at the lowest of the low- yet without realizing it, the conditions were perfect. My great transformation was only a day away, but how could I have known.

I had come back to my mother's house in Kingston, feeling like a great failure. On my birthday I was flipping channels on the TV in my room. The time was around 8:10 PM, and I turned to a Nova documentary on PBS "*This Old Pyramid.*" Even though later I would write a book that would dismiss most of what was said in that documentary, I will always hold for it a sense of gratitude. It saved my life, or should I

more properly say, it gave me back my life. Watching it, I knew without a shadow of a doubt, ancient wisdom was to be my life's focus. I felt but one thing, I had to get to Giza inside the Great Pyramid, and I had to be ready and prepared with knowledge before going. I had made a commitment. I was ready to sacrifice everything for what Egypt had to show me. Anything that seemed helpful for knowing Ancient Egypt was moved towards, everything that would not was dropped. Seven years later to the day, my thirty-fifth birthday, there I was inside the Great Pyramid.

"You had a meeting with the Spirit," Brad a Native man I sometimes visited said later. "Spirit gave you one last chance with that television show. It was up to you, up to your spirit, to find it, watch it, and absorb the feeling. That feeling would flow through you to activate your Intent. You intended at that moment to dedicate your life to learning ancient wisdom. Every cell in your being agreed, and sent you on your way. Good thing too. Spirit had set you up with a great illness, depression, as a sense of shattering your world, to get you to stop rushing, to go searching inside. Even death halted to watch your decision. Would you close the door and move on without a backward glance? And then you made it, and your life as an average man, in an average world, wanting average things, had come to an end. Ceased to exist. However, you too ceased to exist, but you still don't understand that yet."

The trick is to see depression and despair as part of the process- which admittedly, is hard to do when you are in it. Most, when living through this particular stage go on some sort of spiritual search. However, they have no commitment when it comes to truth. What they really want is to be soothed and made feel like everything is ok again. Instead one has to see this reality is a nuthouse, not to fix it or make it nice. But rather, to honestly examine why this world is the way it is.

Taking the First Step is making the unknown our moment by moment existence. Carlos Castaneda called it jumping into an abyss. This move is symbolized by the Tarot Fool, striding happily into oblivion. That jump into the abyss is not the end like people think or hope it is- rather, it is just the beginning. When you are having a wonderful dream, you don't want to wake up. We only want to wake up when we are having a nightmare. But seeing reality as a nightmare goes against everything we have been conditioned to believe about it since birth. To move to a path of Truth one must leave behind peace and happiness. As a result, for a long time one's life will likely become more difficult. To look within where all can be found and personally realized. At this point we should be asking, inside where? Inside what? It is assumed is meant is the body. That our skin is, somehow, a form of dividing line. But am I this body? If not, what does going inside mean? All mediation practices will fail until this little pointer is grasped: *"the I is not me."*

Everyone has the mistaken belief that awakening experiences, glimpses of the Absolute are nice and pleasant (beauty, love, light, whatever). That, however, is the realm of the mystical. Mystical experiences (exploring the dream) are often nice and

pleasant and can be transforming to a degree. However, that is not Awakening.

Going beyond the dream is about death. The death of everything that you believe is real (which of course is everything). THAT is Awakening. And that is not fun for the ego, in fact, it is downright terrifying. One should come back from a glimpse of the Real partially with a sense of love and compassion- but they should also be spooked and freaked out from the direct experience of emptiness. This empty part of spirituality is what most seekers are trying to hide from. What they want instead is the sweet enlightenment they have been promised: becoming Light (happy, nice, full of love, immortal- whatever). Most choose a path that is nice and easy, so they never have to look very deeply. On the actual path toward Truth, however, the moments of peace we experience will be just that, moments between our challenges.

Death will come and take us all; all that we believed ourselves to be, all that we believed to be our own. It is the only 100% guarantee in this dream reality: We are all beings who are going to die. What good is greed, self-importance, pride, titles or anything when we are dead? For the last 3,000 years humans have turned away from all this, to work on making themselves look good and have power over others. The results of following this fear is evident; we are near the total destruction of this world. This of course, is not the only "world" that there has been- but it is still a good and viable world. We do have enough "time" to change- if we, as a group called humanity, use it properly. Not that the destruction of this world would be bad or wrong- it simply doesn't have to happen. Or maybe it does?

All spiritual teachings and religions might be false. Just because one billion people are convinced something is the case does not make it good enough for verification. Lots of people were convinced throwing a virgin into a volcano was a good idea for a while too. "Hope" is not the best foundation for who you are, and what happens after you die. All spiritual goals (God, bliss, power, peace or whatnot) are meaningless if the one seeking for them is still unknown. If we are not a form, then does it matter whatever our form achieves or fails at? We have to go and find this out for ourselves- through experience.

Thus to be honest in our quest, and to truly begin on the right foot, we must start our journey to Truth with the firm conviction that "I don't really know anything about anything- and maybe no one else does either."

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"The Great Knowledge would be found if one should begin to pull down and destroy all the old ruinous buildings, and then enlarge the forecourt, afterward bring lights into the lodging, and then change the doors, stairs, and other things according to our intention." (Confessio- second Rosicrucian manuscript 1615)

By November 1997, I had researched Ancient Egypt a great deal, especially the writings of alternative archaeologists such as John West and RA Schwaller de Lubicz. There came a key moment about six months in. That is when I concluded that I could never understand what the ancients were building and doing, if I was thinking like a modern human. To understand the ancient past, I had to think like the ancient past. So I began to try implementing the practices of Eastern religions, Native Indian ceremonies, Zen dynamics and even metaphysics. Anything that I felt might push my modern mind back to an ancient time. At this point, I had not met any real teachers.

I have to admit that I had gained a great deal of mental understanding and a wealth of information through the process to that point. I also thought I was hot shit. Then I encountered someone who changed my thinking entirely- and I am ever grateful for meeting him. He was the first to show me that I didn't know very much. That instead of hot shit, I was merely the manure part.

His name was Omri, and we met just three days after I moved on an unknown whim to Calgary in 1997- having relocated on a sudden whim. On that particular day, I'd had an urge to go down to a series of shops and restaurants, and I'd followed my hunch. He was working at an Egyptian shop selling statues and wears from the Middle East. Of course, I had almost immediately tried to dazzle him with my amazing knowledge of Egyptian pyramids and temples. We agreed to meet up again the next day. At lunch, he began to talk about what the Ancient Egyptian priests knew, how they practiced, and what they could experience. What he conveyed was so mind-bending that the front part of my head began to pound. At one point, I thought my head would explode. For all I knew about Egypt intellectually, I had little knowledge practically- and absolutely none experientially. Information that I thought was of great value, he showed me was just grade one- a long way from university. He then took me to the New Age bookshop nearby. There, they had a poster board for people promoting events and lectures. He said something at that moment that has stayed with me until this day.

“See all these people promoting themselves. If someone really has wisdom- the old stuff- you won't find them on a place like this. They will just be living it. You will have to go and find them. Or, if they are on a wall like this, you can bet that seeing them will cost basically nothing.”

Like all of us, Omri has his ego structures to work on- but for that lunch alone I am grateful beyond belief. Within time, he introduced me to Taoist Qi Gong and Mr. Park. Through those meetings, I went seeking out Native Indian medicine men (those that I felt might be closest to the wisdom of the ancient world). For a while, they just sort of appeared wherever I turned. My book learning began to become practical. Consequently, I found that the words in the books often did not match the actuality of those who were truly living it.

Religions promise that if you just believe them, and follow their Saviour (Jesus, Buddha, Elvis), that you will receive a “get into heaven free” card. I soon found that the New Age spiritual community just repackaged this. They compressed the same belief into saying you can have your heaven right now while alive. This heaven idea is the spiritual carrot dangled before the masses, ensnaring them in a rope of confinement with no proof of what is promised. The Gnostics were not interested in heaven. Rather, their focus was in finding the power within, “*to save that which does not need to be saved.*”² Thus, the great call to go inwards- for that is where any saviour is found. One wants answers to our deepest questions, not to uphold a tradition or what someone else said. Jesus and Buddha (assuming they were real people) were just guys who got tired of all the bullshit. And there were lots of girls who got tired of the bullshit too- they just never had long stories written about them.

If the Saviours can do it, then so can you and I. Something made them get serious and become spiritual warriors, committed to finding the Answer. This dedication is common to various cultures: The way of the warrior is found in the myth of Horus in Egypt, Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, or Hercules in Greek mythology.

The main attributes required are honesty, courage, and commitment. Honesty to look at the truth of the way we have been living (often for the first time). The courage to not run from what we may find. And commitment to not stop until, finally, we know. The process is not fun. Most spiritual people do not have enough courage and honesty to examine their garbage. Generally, they will only do so when outer reality steps in and bursts a fairy tale or two right in front of their faces.

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The lecture has yet to start, but everyone has taken their seats for the first phase of the night. For the last fifteen minutes we have been bombarded by silence. I use the word “bombarded,” for it feels like we are in a military operation. The standard explanation is that meditative music is played so we can all leave our “worries and fears” outside. The result will be an audience present and calm for the teacher's talk. Sounds nice. Yet I suspect that, knowingly or unknowingly, what is really being set up is an hypnotic trance state. It is easy to get people to act and think how you want them to. Just see some Youtube clips of UK hypnotist-magician Derren Brown for proof. And to back this hypnotism suspicion up further, the teacher begins with a very slow speech pattern. It is as if the words are being directly inspired as she smiles glowingly at us. Hypnotic speech. This will set minds up to have no questioning filter guarding the doorway when the big implants come later, “All is Love, there is nothing to do, you can live your purpose, you need my \$40 DVD's and \$500 retreats.” It may not be conscious manipulation. There may have even been some type of realization with this person. However, egoic layers run very deep. Ego's involvement in anything will be at the very least distortion- at the worst, a mess. We are already hypnotized enough by

the dream and the shadows on Plato's Cave wall. We don't need more sleep. We need sharper awareness.

She is now telling us how lucky we are today,

"It is good there are so many spiritual teachers out there, so you can be like at the grocery store and just pick one out."

I lean over to my friend, "Yes, buying spiritual teachers and buying apples. Nice "logic." And yet, how can you know what they have been sprayed with?"

My friend stares at me.

"People don't try to go after the Truth. They try to adapt society to fit their desires. And they go where they can get favorable answers, and they associate with people who flatter them." (Richard Rose)

The lecture continues. She keeps presenting the standard spiritual routine, "Ask yourself, do you feel peaceful, is your heart open, are you living your purpose, are you bringing light to the world, are you... ."

All read like a robot off a cue card. Never once was the suggestion to examine WHO has the open heart, what a heart is, what is closed, is there a world to bring more light to? Self, world, mind, desires are all presented as automatic things we have to accept without any questioning.

"You are all the spiritual likeness of God," (Really, God looks like a lot of different people then- schizophrenic maybe).

"This world is a wonderful beautiful experience, full of awaiting joy and love." (Tell that to the government torture victim in some Middle East country, or the mother of a 6-year-old child killed by a drunk driver. Quite simply, Truth has to be universal, for everyone, during all experiences. And these airy fairy hopes do not have any meaning to the experiences I just mentioned. Truth must be the same for those who experience love or horror).

I have had enough of this. I stand up to leave.

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One of the biggest fallacies about Awakening is what I call the fairy tale idea. Awaken from the so-called dream, and then you live "happily ever after." First off, such a concept as waking up from a dream is not really the actuality- it is merely a metaphor. The process is unique and somewhat indescribable. To therefore create ideas based on the words "dream" and "awaken," is to create a box. There are two distinct parts to the process of Awakening (or Realization): one process on the way there, and one process that happens afterward. These two parts are best presented

with the symbol of the spiral/labyrinth. The first process is spiraling inward, going into the center of the labyrinth. This is done to see all the conditioning that has shaped our view of the world and ourselves. Like any spiral, it moves faster at the outside than in the center. Therefore, the few people who do make it to the middle feel they are in a great sense of calmness and peace (at the eye of the hurricane). Given that most people are not actually looking for the Truth of their being, but an escape from pain and suffering, reaching this center seems like such an amazing place (it is), that they have no interest in leaning it. They think they have finished the quest. They stop, write a few books, gather some followers and live somewhat comfortably for the rest of their life.

However, they have only gone half way.

That is only known when someone at the center stays honest with themselves. This honesty causes something deeper to rise up. The Totality of the Self is not found at the center of a labyrinth, and thus one must return. In the return process, all that dark stuff you shone your light on the way in has to get revisited. One sees it again not to see how to be rid of it or change it- but how to accept and use it. And spiraling outward can be much harder than the spiraling inward. We may have come to see everything, including our form, is an illusion- albeit a persistent illusion. So as a result, we need to understand ourselves in a new way. Getting to know the fullness of the light also requires getting to know the fullness of the dark. Being in light is one thing, hiding in the light is something else entirely.

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Remember that those who have reached the answer of “Who am I,” say it is so unlike anything they ever thought before as to be shocking. No book or talk could prepare me for the moment in the canyon to be confronted with not being who or what I thought I was. Realization revolutionizes everything. While the body, mind, self and world are found to be unreal, shadows on Plato's Cave wall- and always has been, it seems you can't just jump right into that realization with a body-mind unprepared to handle it, due to the shock. Odds are, among the ranks of hospital patients or homeless people walking around muttering to themselves can be those who had a glimpse of their true nature, but did not have a container able to handle such a vision. Rose and Douglas Harding referred to the need to be vaccinated for this higher dimension.³ Since this higher realization is opened through the force of death, part of the vaccination is to have as many small tastes of death as possible. That way, the body or mind will not short out from the shock of an Absolute Realization (ultimate death). Real meditation is not to forcing of a quiet mind, but is an exercise that has two key functions. The first function is to get ourselves directed enough to focus upon our past traumas. This is done to see how they have, and continue to shape, our entire

³ Now in 2023 I would use another analogy than this, I know what Harding meant but the analogy takes on a very different tone today.

psychological outlook. Secondly, this is also done to take some time to experience being dead- in other words, to practice moments of non-existence. This helps us to prepare for when death really comes.

Awakening is characterized by a breaking away from your old life. This is not subtle. Not a little movement at all- but rather, a death. Only from dying can a new thing be born. Death to your world does not necessarily mean losing the job, wife and kids (though it sometimes does). However it does mean the death of the world that exists in your mind, the foundation on which everything else gets placed. Castaneda called this foundation the Island of the Tonal, and it represents everything we believe ourselves, as human persons, to be. In the shifting comes the realization that most (if not all) of what we thought we were, is nothing but a costume. Once the old costume is seen through thoroughly and is known as being nothing more than a costume, there is a confusing period of limbo. But in that limbo, a new thing can come alive, and it can do so in a “Brave New World.”⁴

We have to create a physical and mental being capable of handling the immense energy that comes from a glimpse of Absolute Reality. No matter how pure the water is that you pour into a container, if it is full of holes and cracks, the pure water will leak out. The Hopi claim that the path should be seen as an emptying of the vessel (body) of all the thoughts, beliefs, values, and traumatic memories. That way we become an empty tube that the Spirit fills. This emptying out is not just about seeing how fast we can fly to God- but also about truth seeking in small things. In finding every one of those cracks and leaks and mending them. A broken part of the self is not going to want to be seen through and dropped. Paradoxically, you must heal something that you will later see does not exist- but then again, a main feature of the path is paradox, itself. Every small thing we let go of is a step closer to true. Is the food we are eating good for us? Are our friendships toxic? How is our sexual life? Our work? Our habits? In what areas are we lying to ourselves? An inventory, in other words, of who we are. Everything found to be false, we back away from. Thus, the path is not actually towards Truth- but backwards (away from untruths). Until finally, as Rose describes, we bump backwards into God. This is another reason why enlightenment might be classified as an accident.

“I’m nobody. Who are you? Are you nobody too?” (Emily Dickinson)

The answer to “who am I” is not found in lineage, a guru, meditation, satsang nights, nor kissing lotus feet. The path is truly a battle of cutting through all of the bullshit to find out what’s left. It is not about re-ordering your mind, or making it more positive. Rather, you are out to shatter the mind. Enlightenment is not some kind of construction project: building, ascending, rising, getting better and nicer. It is a demolition project. The process is about seeing your fears- and this is done by walking right into them. Seeing is to shine a light on that which is hidden. And to shine a light

⁴ When I wrote this chapter in 2019 I was not expecting the speed of insanity this reality would undergo in the years since then. As such my little “joke” of Brave New World is not really a joke any longer. We want to come alive into Truth, not into another matrix overlay as Huxley's *Brave New World* indicates. (2023 addition)

on darkness is to dispel it. Of course, shine your light on anything in the dream state, and you will find it was never there. We don't need faith in a Saviour, heaven, or another person. Instead we need faith in ourselves. That no matter our shortcomings, we have what is needed to walk the path. And that if we are honest and sincere in our seeking- some force will offer us assistance. It seems logical to speculate that if we can learn to be more truthful and honest with ourselves on the mundane physical level, that we will have a better chance to be honest about the Totality of the Self.

To do this work requires a great amount of available energy. As a result, much of what is called spiritual practice, is really activities designed to store or save energy. The marketplace is flooded with these grade 1 exercises- which is fine. Everyone needs to know and do them. The problem is they are sold as the university physics course. This trick is keeping the masses continually learning their ABC's, while never graduating. Meanwhile, it never even occurs to them that there may be far more on the horizon.

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I am walking to the door at the back of the lecture room when I am greeted by one of the people who was accepting the money for the talk, still seated behind the large table.

“Going out to get some air?” she asks.

“Nope. Going home.”

“But you will be missing out on all the wonderful energy that is being generated.”

“That's ok. Not an energy that I need.”

“Well this planet is a wonderful school of learning, so maybe you are just not advanced enough to see the great... .”

“What if it's not? What if this is not a school, and there is nothing to learn? What if what we call learning is just finding ways to walk in circles pretending we are getting somewhere, becoming someone? What if nothing is going on here, except our own hypnotized enslavement to a false reality? Wouldn't that be a kick in the teeth? All of our best hopes and dreams that our suffering is getting us somewhere might all be crap. Instead of a school this might be prison- or even better, a mental institution. What if this is where the universe sends all of its nuts. Believing you are in school when really you are in the psych ward- THAT truly would be a reason for being in the psych ward in the first place. ”

She stares at me with utter disgust. She's rather young, 24 or 25- so perhaps

not old enough to have invested too much into anything. Hopefully she will see what she has gotten herself into before ten years have passed- her bank account empty while she sits in a white robe, while donning an Indian-sounding name whilst wondering why nothing in her life has really changed. To soften some of the blow I smile and respond as I walk out the door.

“Then again, the only one in the psych ward might be me. What do any of us really know?”

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“No self is true self, and the greatest person is nobody.” (Chuang Tzu)

For the last few decades, big money has been made telling people how to manifest their desires and wishes, simply by focusing enough on those items. And on examination, thoughts, actions, and even ceremonies can in fact change elements of this theater production we call life. John Kent calls it “making prop changes in the show.” However this little skill can easily blind someone who should be asking as Kent reminds, *“Who is creating these things, and whose desire is it for these things to change? Does it really matter if we can make more shadow objects in a shadow world? If the self is false, would anything a false self creates have any value in an unreal reality, or is it all just a projection of our own vanity and ignorance onto the walls of one’s cave?”* The spiritual search takes us to such nihilistic questioning.

“If it’s a spiritual thing, don’t do it halfway, because you will only get halfway. And halfway to eternity is nowhere. That is still ignorance, because you know nothing, until you know Everything.” (Richard Rose)

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Now, outside of the Satsang building, I take a long deep breath- and really let it out on the exhale. As if trying to push everything from inside away. It is always hard to know how dangerous such events can be. I know two different people, both seduced by popular gurus, who within only a few months were no longer thinking for themselves. Each walking around in a zombie-like state, repeating words from the great guru's books. It is easy at the beginning of our search to get seduced by all sorts of happy promises.

As long as someone is focused on having a happy mind, they will be limited as to the depth of their study. Yet as soon as one wonders, instead, what it may be like to have clarity or sanity of mind, the search changes. And to see our mind clearly only happens by finally observing the mind from a vantage beyond it. That will open a

fundamental question should such a view finally occur: What is the mind if I can observe it? And who, then, am I, if I observe the very thing I believed I was?

Just because something feels good does not necessarily make it good in our search for answers. That is why (beyond simple faith in ourselves) we make habit of doubt chief ally and best friend. Not as a wall to disregard everything. Rather, as a tool that says "I don't know, but I Want to Know." People say they want to discover the Truth, right up to the moment they realize that it may rob them of their deepest hopes, desires and dreams. We have to want the ultimate answer more than our desire to feel good, for if feeling good is really our goal, we will stop when that is attained- never questioning if there could be more. It does not mean that feeling good is a bad thing, it is a useful sometimes- especially if the body or mind has been sick for a long while. We must get into a stability of energy to go forward. But we do that to move forward, not simply to feel better, because even feeling good cannot be allowed to act as a temptation, or turned into a false harbor for stopping safely during the often unsettling search for Answers.

"When they have acquired it (Truth) on their own, they will no longer be a Christian, but a Christ." -Gospel of Phillip-