

A Welcome to the World of AWARENESS



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Welcome to the 'pure land' of knowledge, a land of 'pure knowledge'. This 'pure knowledge' is not knowledge 'of' or 'about' things but direct subjective knowing. Though it has had many names - gnosis, wisdom, intuition, realization, enlightenment, awakening - its essence, quite simply is *awareness*. Welcome then, to the World of Awareness. Welcome too, to 'The Awareness Principle' - a principle transcending both science and religion as we know them. The Awareness Principle transcends science because it recognises that the fundamental scientific fact and the true starting point of all scientific investigation is not the existence of a universe of things or beings in space and time but *awareness* of such a universe. By this I mean not simply my or your awareness, or even our awareness or God's awareness but awareness as such. The single most important misconception running through the entire history of Western thought is the belief that awareness is either a mere by-product of matter or the private property of individual beings. What if is the other way round? What if all things, and all beings are but individualised portions and expressions of an ultimate or absolute awareness - one that is not the product or property of any thing or being we are aware of. From this point of view 'God' too, is not some sort of supreme being with awareness. Instead God *is* awareness - a divine and all-pervasive awareness of which all beings and all things are but a portion and expression.

Theists and atheists can argue endlessly about whether God exists without ever asking what we mean by the word 'God'. What neither of them question is whether or not what we call 'God' is any type of existing being at all. There is a paradox here. Let us consider it more deeply. The paradox is that the 'existence' of God would reduce what we call 'God' to one existing thing or being among others, thus turning God into something limited and finite - hardly a fitting understanding of the divine. What I call 'The Awareness Principle' transcends the question of God's existence or non-existence, arguing that even though not an existing thing or being, God is nevertheless the ultimate *reality* behind and within all things and beings. That is because before and behind all existence - all existing things and beings - is *awareness* - awareness of existence and

awareness of being. Let us consider this again. To ask whether God exists is like asking whether you or I exist – whether we *are*? How do we know that we exist – that we *are*? How do you know that you exist – that you *are*? How do any of us know that we exist – that we are? We know because each of us is *aware* of being. It is this most intimate, profound and primordial *awareness* of being that belongs to the very core and essence of every existing being. Since this basic *awareness* of being belongs to the very core of every existing being it also transcends every existing being. This pure and profound awareness of being - and not any thing or being we are aware of, is the true essence and reality of God – the divine.

Whilst God is not some supreme Creator being ‘with’ awareness, God is that awareness which is the absolute, universal and divine reality behind and within all Creation and all Creatures. People who believe that God is a supreme being however, and not a supreme and absolute awareness, are forced to believe that God ‘made’ or ‘created’ the world out of nothing. Atheistic scientists, on the other hand, still seek an alternative explanation of how the universe and all things came to be. For Creationists the answer to the question of how things came to be is some Big Being they call God. For scientists it is some cosmic event they call the Big Bang. Both are badly mistaken. A theist is someone who believes that God is an existing being that has or possesses an omniscient awareness. An atheist denies the existence of such a being. A scientist is someone who claims that awareness can be reduced to the by-product, property or function of some existing thing, like the human brain. What they are actually claiming is that awareness can be reduced to or explained by some particular thing we are aware *of*. Yet there is another paradox here to consider more deeply. For surely just to be aware of something, to perceive it and be capable of observing and studying it, already assumes the *reality* of awareness as such? Thus to seek a cause for awareness in any thing we are aware *of* – the brain for example - is like seeking a cause for a dream, or for the whole experience of dreaming as such, in one particular thing we dream of. This is patent absurdity. But it is an absurdity that has yet to be clearly pointed out. The Awareness Principle does so. For its 1st Principle of Awareness is simply that Awareness as such *is* the 1st Principle of all things. Why? Because awareness cannot – *in principle* – be explained by or reduced to any thing or

being we are aware *of*. That is why I prefer to use the term ‘awareness’ rather than ‘consciousness’. Consciousness is awareness *of* something. Awareness on the other hand is consciousness *as such* – pure consciousness. This is not just a philosophical or semantic difference. Think about it. Unless you are already asleep I’m sure each of you, right now, is conscious of many things – that is to say, aware of them. The things you are conscious or aware of may include parts of your body, different bodily sensations such as calm or restlessness, needs such as hunger or thirst, the basic mood you find yourself in, thoughts and feelings you have as I speak, the sound of my voice and the words I use, perceptions of the room around you and the objects within it, memories of different sorts or anticipations of things to come, and impulses of different sort – whether a wish to go to the bathroom, to walk around or a wish to speak, to ask a question, agree or disagree with me etc. Sitting listening to me, you may be conscious or aware *of* any or all of such things. But think about it. The awareness *as such* is not any of those things. *Awareness* of the room you are sitting in and the objects in it, for example, is not itself a room or any object in it. Similarly, awareness of a need, desire, sensation or impulse, feeling or thought is not itself a need or desire, sensation or impulse, feeling or thought.

Think about the principle I have just outlined here, for it is the most important Principle of Awareness that leads us to what I call The Practice of Awareness. Let us take one example I gave. The awareness of a thought is not itself a thought. Therefore it is something innately free of thought. Think about that. For when people talk about meditation, particularly Buddhist sitting meditation or Zen, they are caught up in the idea that to meditate properly and achieve a higher, more ‘enlightened’ state of awareness they must *stop thinking*. Even the Zen masters thought so. The Japanese master Dogen said that Zen is all about finding the answer to a single question. The question as he put it was “How do you think ‘not thinking’?” There is truth in this question, but the answer to it is simpler than most people imagine – namely that there is no need in the first place to ‘think’ not-thinking. All we need to ‘do’ is to simply be *aware* of our thoughts. For though thoughts and thinking occur within awareness, the awareness of them is not itself a thought or thought process. The true question is not “How to think ‘not thinking’”.

The true question is how not to *think* thinking but how to simply be aware of our thoughts and thinking, knowing that awareness of our thoughts and our thinking is something innately and entirely free of thoughts and thinking. Likewise, our awareness of a desire is not itself a desire and thus something innately free of desire. Thus there is no need to suppress any desires to be free of them. Let me say that again, there is no need to stop thinking - or to stop having needs, impulses and desires, in order to be free of them – for awareness as such is innately free of any thing we are aware of - whether a need, impulse, desire, feeling or thought.

In my writings and books I define The Awareness Principle as a new foundational principle for science, philosophy, psychology, religion and life. Let me summarise why. It is a new foundational principle for *science* because it recognises that the starting point of scientific investigation – the most fundamental scientific ‘fact’ - is *not* the ‘objective’ existence of a world of bodies in space and time but subjective *awareness* of such a universe. It is a new foundational principle of philosophy because it recognises that *awareness* of existence or being is prior to and therefore transcends all existing things and beings. It is a new foundational principle of science, philosophy and psychology because it argues how, in principle, awareness cannot be either the by-product of any thing we are aware of, or the private property of any self or being we are aware of. It is a new foundational principle of religion because it allows us to recognise that God indeed does not ‘exist’ as a supreme being with, but *is* awareness - and therefore the ultimate reality behind all things. Thus just as there can, in principle, be nothing ‘outside’ of space or ‘before’ time (the problem of Big Bang theory) so there can - in principle - be nothing outside awareness, nothing outside God.

Finally, The Awareness Principle is a new principle of life. For the basic Principle of Awareness leads to a new type of ‘yoga’ or Practice of Awareness – one which liberates our consciousness from attachment to any thing we are aware of. It does so not simply by repetitious talk of ‘non-attachment’ or ‘mindfulness’, as if these words were mantras - but instead by clearly explaining and re-minding us of a basic and fundamental principle: namely that the *awareness* of a need, impulse, desire, feeling or thought is not itself a

need, impulse, desire, feeling or thought, and therefore innately or inherently free of any thing we are of. The awareness of any thing is not itself any thing at all. Yet the fact that awareness is 'no-thing' does not mean that it is *nothing*. On the contrary, it is what makes awareness more real than anything. Awareness then, is not anything. And yet, awareness, ultimately, is everything. For there is nothing – no thing – that is not a shape taken by awareness, a manifestation of awareness and an individualised portion of that ultimate all-pervasive awareness that is God.

Put simply, the Awareness Principle recognises, in principle, three fundamental truths. The *first* fundamental truth is that awareness as such is no 'thing' – and cannot be reduced to any thing we are aware of. The second fundamental truth is that *awareness is everything*. The third, no less fundamental truth, is that *everything is an awareness*. A thought or feeling for example, is not just some thing we are aware of. It in turn is an awareness of something else. We take it for granted of course, that human beings are not just 'things' we happen to be aware of. Instead we understand that each human being is themselves an *aware* being. That is not to say that human beings - or any beings - simply have or possess awareness. Rather, like every atom or cell, animal or plant, rock or tree, every human being *is* an awareness. That is not to say that atomic, molecular or cellular awareness, has the same character as human awareness. Yet the human body is an organic symphony of the awareness that constitutes each of its atom and molecules, cells and organs. And the human being is a unique and ever-changing constellation of different tones and textures, movements and directions, patterns and qualities of awareness. To truly be aware of another human being is to sense the unique tones and qualities of awareness which shape and colour *their* experience of the world and other people. When we speak of another human being as 'warm' or 'cool', 'close' or 'distant', 'closed' or 'open', 'light' or 'heavy', 'bright' or 'dull', 'rigid' or 'flexible', 'solid' or 'airy', 'icy' or 'fiery' we are not merely describing them in 'metaphorical' terms - describing our sense of a person's 'soul' with words deriving from sensory qualities of things. Instead we are giving expression to innate sensual qualities of their awareness or 'soul' - and of awareness or 'soul' as such. It is not that sensory qualities of things become mere metaphors for soul qualities. Rather it is these very sensual qualities of awareness or soul

– soul qualities - that find *expression* in the sensory qualities of all things. ‘The World of Awareness’ *is* the ‘soul world’ lying behind and beyond our physical world and life. There, as in our dreams, the qualities of awareness or soul qualities that colour our moods and come to expression as sensory phenomena and their qualities – a dark or black mood being perceived as a dark or black cloud for example. Similarly a euphoric feeling of ‘levity’ or being ‘uplifted’ may translate itself into a dream of our body levitating or flying. What we experience as our *dream body* is nothing but our eternal *soul body* as such. This is not our objective physical body – our body as perceived from without, but our body as we are aware of it and feel it from within - our inwardly felt or ‘subjective’ body. What we call ‘the soul’ *is* our inwardly felt *body* – essentially a body of awareness made up of sensual shapes, tones and textures *of* awareness.

Think about it. Is not our most immediate inner awareness of our bodies made up of elemental qualities of awareness or soul - ranging from dense solidity or rigidity to watery fluidity, airy diffuseness, spacious expansiveness or fiery vitality? It is such ‘elemental’ soul qualities that the sages of the past knew as the true meaning of ‘the five elements’ – understanding them as both basic elements of nature and our own human soul nature. Elemental qualities of awareness find expression not only in our immediate proprioceptive awareness of our own bodies but constitute the ‘soul’ of all bodies – no matter whether these be dreamt or physical, bodies of people or bodies of seemingly inanimate, insentient or unaware ‘things’. Our physical bodies themselves are but patterns of atomic, molecular and cellular awareness. Though their human physical *form* may decompose when we die, yet the awareness that imbues every atom of them does not. The individual combinations of soul qualities that shape our sense of *self* and imbue our body with its unique *form* survive after death in the form of the ‘soul body’ itself. This remains perceptible in the soul world – the world of awareness - even without physical form. Each night it takes non-physical form in our dreams - not only in the form of our dreamt body as such, but as the entire ‘body’ of our dream environment and every other body within it. Just as our entire dream environment is the larger *body* we inhabit in our dreams, so is the entire physical universe the body of a larger universal awareness and the expression of a larger *world of awareness* - one that we remain largely asleep to!

