

Dialogue 1

In your book you mention "the open secret". Where does this expression come from?

When I walked across the park, one of the most amazing and liberating things that was seen was that everything was the ground of unconditional love. There is nothing which is not sacred, and regardless of any particular state I might be in, I saw that grace was continuously available.

Look, here is the secret. (picks up a sweater and throws it on the floor) In the dream we see a separate object. When there is no illusory, separate self, the ground of unconditional love is seen. This is what is always open and available to us. There is nothing that is not the ground of this natural unity. The secret is that there is no separation, but it remains a secret as long as we believe we are a separate entity.

How can I see that?

You can't see it until you stop looking for it, and simply let what is be there.

How can I do that?

You can't do it. But you can be open to the suggestion that it can happen.

Allow awareness simply to rest in what is, bum on seat, frustration at not seeing, that's it.

Simply allow what is and the ground of love will emerge to embrace you. It is always ready and

willing, like the eternal lover, to welcome you into the infinite. There's no need to change or still the mind, or purify the body . . . simply, exactly as you are is the divine expression.

But that sounds too simple.

We all know in our hearts that the answer to all of this is very simple. Christ said the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. It is in the very ordinary. Your unique is-ness is the secret. This moment has never happened before, do you see that? It's here and then it's gone, and will never happen again. And now here's another moment. It is unique and it arises and then falls back into the infinite, never to be seen again. It is what you are, do you see that? You are the infinite expression, moving in and out. You can't escape from, or stop, what is; it's a continuous and eternal dance . . . so let go and simply allow it.

Are you recommending that we bring our awareness to what is as much as possible?

I cannot recommend anything. I am suggesting to you that you come to understand and feel the need to wonder at the nature of what is here right now. Come to see that this is the timeless nature of the infinite.

See that the mind will try to turn what is being discussed here into another process. When I talk to people about simply being aware of what is, the mind immediately locks into the idea of a process that should be practised. The mind is always looking for formulas. There can be no process to become what already is, and so there is of course nowhere to go and nothing to do.

What have you got to say about formal meditation?

Who is it that is meditating? If you sit and close your eyes and search forever, you will never find a meditator. For what reason do you meditate?

To still the mind.

For what?

In order that I can be available for enlightenment.

So while you are there expecting, or even trying, to be open for enlightenment, you are closed off to that which is, as it is. The anticipation alone is enough to guarantee that. Anticipation is a function of the mind which is attached to memory of the past and expectations about what will happen in the future. You have no choice about meditation or being or not being available for what you still think of as an object called enlightenment. Be open to the realisation that there is only light and that there is nothing to do and nowhere to go.

But if I choose to sit and watch my breathing, surely this shows my devotion?

When you come to see and understand the nature of what is, its simplicity, its immediacy, its uniqueness and its transience, then it's also understood that there is no point in formal meditation. You're sitting at the kitchen table drinking coffee and the thought comes, "I will go and meditate". Then you see that there is simply no point, because where you are is what is. What is, is what is, and so why go to find it upstairs? When this is embraced, it's possible that it will be recognised that what you are is absolute awareness ... nothing more, nothing less.

I have a teacher who has a form of very simple and slow yogic movement, and I find it slows my mind and puts me into a space that feels very close to pure beingness.

So what?

So, does this have a value?

It has an apparent value in the wheel of life. But so apparently does jogging or eating vegetarian food. Let's be very clear about this. What is being communicated here, right now, is never going to be popular or draw lots of people. The mind needs a target, a place to go to, some kind of hopeful journey. What I am suggesting to you is that you accept that you are helpless, and then something else can arise. There is nothing that you can do that draws you nearer to awakening.

How can a supposed doer practise non-doing? I am saying that there is nowhere to go, because this is it.

I find in my work as a therapist that in general people have a heavy history, all of which they are trying to drop in order that the belief systems they have adopted can be changed, and the future be better. This history is powerful when you are involved in it emotionally, and it is not easy to drop all of that and be here now.

It's impossible to choose to be overwhelmed or not . . . we are simply helpless characters in a novel, and if it is that we are taken over by these emotions, then that is consciousness choosing to be taken over by these emotions. However, let's be clear about this, I am not talking here about "being here now". Being here now is a continuous process for everyone

most of the time. If someone is imagining being on a holiday in the Caribbean, when sitting at their desk at the office, then their imagination is creating the scene they want right now. If someone is trying to kick a ball into a goal, then they are being here now. If someone feels jealous of their girlfriend kissing someone else, they are being here now. What I am suggesting is that you become open to the nature and availability of what is. So can I ask you to close your eyes . . . Now simply become aware of whatever is most upfront for you in your awareness . . . it may be the sound of my voice, or noises in the room, or feelings in your body or face. It can shift quite quickly through all kinds of phenomena, and doesn't have to stay with one thing.

Now let whatever is there be there and drop the person that questions or judges, or has expectations about it. Just drop altogether the person that is trying to work it all out or anticipate what is coming next. Let there just be a seeing of what is. Keep it simple . . . just let it be there . . . (long pause)

OK, now open your eyes . . . in that moment, where was your past?

Nowhere.

Where was your future?

Nowhere.

You see, what I am suggesting is that during that period we had together, there were moments when the self no longer existed . . . there was just what is. This has no connection with "being here now". There is no "one" looking at "now" and there is no "here".