

## Chapter Twenty-two

### HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS I

*Truth does not lie in any temple, in any mosque, in any church. And it has no path to it except through one's own understanding of oneself, inquiring, studying, learning. Then there is that which is eternal.*

**J. Krishnamurti, "The Ending of Sorrow."**

*I suppose if there is a fundamental question it might be, "Who am I? "with a second related question hot on its heels, "How can I wake up?"*

**LU**

*From matter to body to mind to Spirit. In each case, consciousness or the observing Self sheds an exclusive identity with a lesser and shallower dimension, and opens up to deeper and higher and wider occasions, until it opens up to its own ultimate ground in Spirit itself.*

**Ken Wilber, *A Brief History of Everything*.**



**MR**

**Self-exploration and Waking Up**

You are asking serious questions about yourself and your own life-directions. I suppose if there is a fundamental question it might be, "Who am I?" with a second related question hot on its heels, "How can I wake up?"

Self-exploration and waking up are the most difficult things to do, because they involve change. Most of us want only egoic assurances that we are fine just the way we are, and confirmations of opinions and values we already hold dear. As Andrew Cohen once said, "Everybody wants to be enlightened, but nobody wants to change."

Enlightened masters, of course, don't offer egoic assurances. They will shatter you, sometimes gently, sometimes harshly. Transformation means looking at yourself and your conditionings honestly, truly, deeply, persistently. The journey is arduous, difficult and psychologically dangerous. It is not for everybody.

## **MR                      Without Fear, Go For The New**

When you say, "I love to move into new avenues all the time with music and reading," you are saying a lot about yourself in terms that have considerable meaning for me. Hence, our letters.

Go for the new, the things that open doors into whatever is unknown now, but which can be experienced simply by having courage and confidence enough to stride into the new domain. Ignorance and confusion transform into light-filled

clarity and unending waves of bliss. As Alfred North Whitehead once said, “The ultimate metaphysical principle is the creative advance into novelty.”

The values are simple enough: Will this person or book or piece of music help me grow, or will it dim my sight, drain my energy, destroy my sensibilities or my mind? Will it add to my creativity, psychological health, spiritual expansion? Will it contribute to my awakening consciousness, or will it merely drop me into the maw of oblivion? Will it add to my capacity for courage, compassion, love, generosity, empathy, or will it merely give me facts and information that leave me inwardly unchanged?

Even if it threatens to shatter the security of my known worlds, can I summon up courage enough to see myself in new ways through new eyes, and thereby leave the familiar behind and embrace new self-perceptions? Can I embrace and nourish my highest potentialities without being overcome by fear? And even when I do feel fear along the way — and I will — can I summon up enough love and trust to dissolve it, and move forward, onward, upward?

**MR**                      **Bottom Line: Trust Yourself**

Hi, M,

Good for you regarding Hesse, Watts, Osho, et. al.

Bottom line: trust yourself. Look into people and their works. See what they have of value for you. Make up your own mind. Dare to know what you think and feel on your own.

Nearly all of the great ones are controversial. They are breaking rigid societal molds, differentiating from old models, incorporating whatever is new and of value in them, discarding their limitations, transcending them, moving up to the next level of consciousness.

That process of growth upsets everybody — the press, the priests, the politicians, the vested business interests, the whole of the status quo. It's just the nature of things. That's why people stoned Buddha, tried to kill him; murdered Socrates; crucified Jesus, etc. The process of growth — and of resistance to growth — goes on forever.

That's no reason to be afraid of evolving one's self, and especially no reason to believe the press, social authorities, or sycophantic or disgruntled followers.

Look into the great ones, explore them, let them touch your heart and mind, let them shake you up a little (or a lot). Let them help you open your own doors of perception.

Happy reading!

Best,

L

## **GS                    Ascending the Levels of Consciousness**

I guess when I distill my thoughts, I can say that the levels of ascending consciousness I am trying to describe can run something like this —



zones, a kind of psycho-spiritual regression back to a primitive, pre-personal, pre-Enlightenment, pre-modern, pre-rational, animistic-mythic state in which they feel merged with unconscious natural elements. They are good-hearted people and I like and respect them. However, they tend to see "spirituality" as going "back to Eden," a return to a pre-conscious womb-state, which they think of as "innocence and paradise."

I don't see it that way. I see the spiritual journey as an interior evolutionary and transformational developmental process leading up *from* Eden, as writer Ken Wilber phrased it, into higher and increasingly more inclusive levels of transpersonal awareness, culminating in a nondual embrace of the entire Kosmos — inanimate matter, life forms, mind, and spirit.

To their enormous credit, some of the people with whom I have corresponded understand this central and most important issue of our times: "Lack of awareness does not mean the *presence* of paradise," said Wilber.

He is right.

The evolutionary development of consciousness involves the ascending movement *from* a self-based, fear-oriented perspective rooted in safety needs, survival needs, and narcissistic satisfactions, *up to* an orientation based upon growth, change, the diminution of narcissism, the burgeoning capacity for empathy and all-embracing love. It is an ascension from lower to higher levels of consciousness that increase autonomy and compassion every step of the way. Ultimately, we arrive at that point of expanded, non-egoistic, psycho-spiritual embrace where nothing exists outside of us: we are the All, and the All is us, and there is no "I," "we" or "it," only the unified, nondual Totality of existence: the Kosmos: matter, mind and Spirit: Buddha's One Taste.

You're so right about the insane events going on in the world today. Hard to get through an entire day without gasping in horror at what people are doing to each other, to animals and plants, to the Earth itself. Although enlightened masters who radiantly embody love, peace, clarity and genius have walked the earth in every human era, spreading insight and wisdom wherever they traveled, we humanoids still don't get it, still don't wake up, and still don't learn much. Ah, well.

The most we can do, I suppose, is courageously go our own way, pursuing the path of love, peace, compassion, and creativity, sharing whatever intelligence and wisdom we can, helping whenever possible, not giving up. I can't speak for all, of course, only for myself. That's what my music and various writings are about — doing what I can to help make the world a little more beautiful, a little more loving, kind, and cooperative. Every drop in the ocean makes the whole ocean greater, even if only a little. Every little bit counts.

I have long been a bit of an outsider, a writer-observer, distancing myself from politics and other styles of war, but the recent electoral triumph of this George Bush fellow, even after four years of unmitigated stupidity, incompetence and destruction, has left me and Sonia depressed, angry, and bereft, especially Sonia. She wants to move to Canada. I say, No, our positive, creative outlook on life is needed *here* more than ever before.

So I am in the odd position of declaring my faith in America's resilience and

ultimate good sense (in spite of the masses' re-election of Bush), while counseling patience, detachment, and the strength to retain at least a smidgeon of hope for the long-term evolution of human consciousness. I say "odd," because I am the one who takes an extremely jaundiced view of human conduct, even while giving all of my creative energies to the awakening of the most lofty thoughts, feelings, perceptions and resultant actions in readers' and listeners' heart-soul-minds.

In other words, I say to all, declare your independence and keep on keepin' on, no matter how stupid, ignorant, and violent the human species is (not only here, but elsewhere too). Detach, pay attention to the quality of your own thinking, go your own way as outlaws, outsiders, and self-reliant thinkers, keep your backs to the sun and your eyes on the awakening of everybody's human potential (including the frightened, retrogressive, Bible-pounding idiots who voted for a dolt, not only once, but twice). That potential is vast and profound — but it takes work: Buddha did it, Jesus did it, Lao Tzu did it, Ken Wilber and dozens of others have done it. We can too.

Sometimes Sonia loses patience and says, "Fuck 'em. I'm outta here." I say, "People are people everywhere. Nothing's different anywhere. There's really no place to go." She says, "Yes, there is. Places like Canada, Sweden, and Denmark are light-years ahead of us." I say, "We live in California, the most enlightened state in America." "Yeah, well wait until Bush's storm troopers knock on our door and tell us you can't write or play music anymore unless you glorify God and the American flag." I say, "But I DO write and play to glorify God — even though I don't believe in mytho-magical fig newtons of the human imagination. Everything is positive, to the greater glory of human consciousness!" "Fuck 'em," she responds in uncharacteristically low-brow language. Ah, well.

So it's an interesting time around here, meaning the country in general and our cabin in the woods in particular.

For myself, I insist on detachment. I won't make decisions based on reactions to politicians' imbecility. I go my own way, no matter which way the wind blows. And I know that political movements and economic conditions swing like pendulums. This too shall pass, and meanwhile, as the pendulum slowly sways from one pole to another, I see it, watch it, remain aware of its permutations — and continue going my own way, no matter what.

Even if we're locked in jail, we're free. Freedom is an inner condition, a state of mind and being, and I won't let the morons who presently occupy the seats of power determine my thoughts and feelings and actions. Meanwhile, Sonia frets and carries on, so I have to be strong enough for both of us, which I am and will continue to be.

It just feels strange, to be urging tolerance for political retards and prattling about faith in humanity, when I dislike having to focus on that ilk in the first place. I am infinitely more interested in celebrating geniuses who have contributed to the greater good of all, elevating this mass of people one stage at a time to the heights of consciousness, compassion and creativity (see the "Three C's" essay I sent you a while back.) The relatively few folks at the top of the pyramid of expanded awareness are my people, not the immense herd of misguided dolts who put Bush and his cronies in office.

Well, hello. When I sat down to write to you I had no idea this e-mail would take this direction. But that's one of the wonderful things about writing, isn't it? You start — and the road takes whichever direction nature indicates. Rather like improvising music, isn't it?

All the best, L

**GS**

**Awareness and Choice**

Let me tell you a brief story, in which I applied to myself my own notions of combining awareness with willful choice to alter consciousness and creatively determine my own direction for the day —

The moment I woke up this morning and sat on the edge of the bed in my pajamas, I realized that the thought-current running through my mind involved the mean-spirited attacks of two of my harshest critics. Those attacks had been with me in my thoughts all night, making it difficult, almost impossible, to sleep. And here they were, still with me in the morning, the pricks, tearing me down, belittling me and my work, distorting my statements, smearing my name, confusing and upsetting my supporters, blah-blah-blah. And there I was, still sleepy-eyed, waging war with them, coming up with angry retorts, doing everything I could in my mind to bash them back and bury them under an avalanche of vitriolic abuse.

Although I woke up with these thoughts, I also instantly recognized that such was the case. In that moment, I caught myself in mid-thought, stepped back, and detached from the “robotic” mind-stream. That recognition, that detachment, gave me an objective point of view — and a choice. How did I want to begin my day? Fighting with my critics? Dredging up as much negative energy as I could to combat their malevolent distortions? And did I want to spend the rest of my day snarling and growling at them inside my own head?

No.

So I said to myself, “Self, forget these guys. The war is in your own head, not ‘out there.’ Set your justified grievances aside. Stop fueling them with your own energy. Let them die away on their own. Set the past behind you, where in fact it already is. Greet this new moment with a smile. Set your course straight ahead for the day —

“Hug your sweetheart Sonia. Read your wonderful books. Go outside by the stream

and chop wood for the stove and smell the air and look at the new yellow spring daffodils. Celebrate these wonderful moments in your life. They are real, not illusions. They are yours, not somebody else's. These moments are filled with light and love and joy — but in order to see them, you must snap out of this toxic haze and see them for what they are. They are all you have. Live them to the hilt. Let yourself be here now. Breathe in this glorious life-energy. Smile, chuckle at your silly self, get up out of bed, and welcome today's every moment. Do it, my friend. Do it!"

And that's what I did.

Talk with you soon.

Keep singing. Every song is beautiful!

## **MR                    Don't Start With Conclusions**

Hi, M,

I'm a subscriber to the notion that there are no contradictions in nature, only complementary unities. Hence, I reject nothing, accept all, and see each object, process and worldview in relation to all others. They tend to find their own place within a spectrum of consciousness that moves from matter up to life/body, into mind, into spirit. Everything finds its place somewhere within that spectrum.

In the mind realm, reason, will, control, power over self and external/internal forces play a great role in developing a sense of personal purity and strength. Control, will, concentration, etc. are good things at this level, marvelous springboards into still higher stages, where transcendence of the self-sense, letting





Patience is the key.

There is an ancient story about looking at a glass of muddy water. While the mud is stirred up, the water is opaque. It becomes clear only after the mud settles. If one acts while the water is roiling, little or nothing of a positive nature can transpire. But if one does not act out of fear or panic; if one patiently waits for the mud to settle, then, when the inner water is clear, a new set of psychic arrangements makes itself known, and in the clear light of awareness, one can take action that is appropriate to the situation.

In other words, don't bolt and run, or make rash and only partially informed decisions. The middle ground is difficult to maintain — the psychological territory between the muddy water and the clear water, before the process of attaining clarity is completed. It is difficult to remain in the middle, because issues aren't clear, known, or settled into a comprehensive pattern. One feels uneasy, even fearful (as the Wall Street day traders are demonstrating), and wants to try to DO something to make the muddy waters settle faster and in accordance with one's own values, needs, wishes, and desires.

One wants control. One wants to direct and shape processes that, in fact, have a life of their own and are not interested in being shaped or controlled. They don't care about our personal anxieties and our need for security and egoic fulfillment. Personally, I think there is much wisdom in the ancient saying, “When in the midst of chaos, don't just do something: SIT there! The chaos will settle in its own time.” When it does, *then* is the time to stand up, make decisions, and take action. Trust and patience are the keys.

It's good for me to write about this, simply because it helps me clarify my own situation. That in itself brings a bit of comfort. The particulars don't really matter. However, the principle does, and it applies not only to me, but to everybody.

We should all remember the wisdom in these words. Nobody leads a life devoid of occasional turmoil and the doubts and/or questions such turmoil brings. Knowing when to stand back, take a seat, relax, and wait for the muddy water to settle is a good thing.