

MEDITATIONS ON EXPANDING OUR AWARENESS - LUCID WAKING

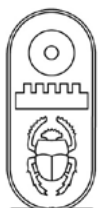
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Humanity has been on a quest to expand its awareness from the earliest times of its communal existence. The desire to know and understand its environment and capabilities have been critical to our survival and growth as a species. This continuously growing body of knowledge is passed down generationally in the form of culture with the aim of benefiting the welfare of the group's members and future generations. Humankind's expanded awareness of the world we live in and the forces acting in our world have progressively led to the development of the many technologies which have promoted human health and material welfare. Our awareness of the nature of our material environment has increased exponentially in the last two centuries, enabling humanity to sustain a large population and simultaneously increase longevity.

An important engine of this progress has been our ability to extend the range of our physical senses beyond their intrinsic limits and to employ the resulting expanded awareness of our environment to our material benefit. Over many centuries, humankind has designed and created instruments that significantly extend the

range of our physical senses. One example is our sense of sight. Microscopes enable us to discern the minute qualities of materials well beyond the capacity of our eyes, which are limited by our eyes' lenses and the nature and density of the receptor cells of our retinas. X-ray machines produce visible impressions created by energy that passes through our bodies to which our eyes are otherwise insensitive. Similarly, telescopes enable us to see light particles that continually strike our eyes when we look at the night sky, but which otherwise are imperceptible to us. Video equipment enables us to see events that are distant in space and time. Numerous other inventions similarly augment our senses of hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

Notwithstanding the relative progress that humanity has made in building our awareness of the physical forces that govern much of the observable universe through the extension of our generally recognized five physical senses, human experience has led many to accept that there are other knowable phenomena that lie immediately beyond the typical scope of these senses and our awareness. Some of these phenomena have been



scientifically documented in recent years, such as the identification of a brain area endowing humans with an innate sense of direction due to our brains' ability to register changes in the magnetic field lines of Earth. There is also evidence of an internal sense of touch which allows us to sense subtle conditions within our physical body. Experienced yogis use this capability to reduce their heart rate or increase their body temperature at will. The use of intuition to access information without reliance on memory or normal sensory means is another example.

The exploration of these and similar phenomena is generally left to the area of study known as parapsychology. Gaining wide notice in the 1960s and 1970s, parapsychology investigates capabilities of consciousness extending beyond the five physical senses, such as telepathy, precognition, telekinesis, and remote viewing. Thousands of years of human experience from around the world give credence to the existence of these phenomena, although they escape examination by conventional scientific methods.

While these various means of expanding our awareness have significantly impacted how humans experience the world, an important avenue for expanding awareness with unlimited potential for bringing about a transformation of the experience of humankind remains largely unexplored. Based on our lived experience, it is apparent that there is more to us than what literally meets the eye. There is a part of us that we can all see and touch, and there is another part of us that is not discernible nor measurable by our five physical senses. While humankind continues to study extensively the first part, which is the physical body and the accompanying material world revealed through our senses, we have devoted comparatively little attention to the seeming intangible part, which is our awareness.

From a mystical point of view, our ability to reflect upon our own awareness is one of the greatest assets of human consciousness. While it is widely recognized that animals and plants exhibit consciousness and even decision-making capabilities to promote their survival and comfort, human beings appear to be unique in our ability to contemplate the



fact and nature of our awareness. This represents a higher expression of self-consciousness than simply recognizing an individuated identity which can be seen in other species.

However, the human capacity to reflect on the immaterial aspect of self is generally overlooked and its benefits are not fully recognized. While we are awake, the mental life of most human beings is devoted to the same concerns as other creatures, centered on meeting organic needs for finding food, mating, and avoiding discomfort and threats to one's physical existence. We also know from direct experience that when not occupied by immediate needs, humans spend a great portion of their mental life ruminating on past events as well as contemplating various versions of future states. Cataloging these thoughts will reveal that they are chiefly related to securing material needs in more elaborate fashion for themselves, their offspring, and other members of the species.

While humanity has made great progress by expanding its awareness of the nature of the material world, it is of equal importance to be aware of awareness. The content of awareness changes continuously, but awareness remains the same. The content of our awareness has dramatically changed since we were children. Nonetheless, we experience the world from the same center of perception throughout our lives. Our circumstances

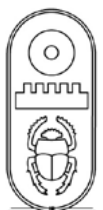
may change, our clothes may change, where we live may change, our bodies may change, our name may change. However, the locus or point of our awareness, the seer behind the eyes that look out on the world does not change. Even death does not alter this. Based on accounts of near-death experiences, the same point of awareness continues beyond the cessation of the functioning of the human body. Awareness is the immovable object.

To be aware of awareness itself is to temporarily wake up while we participate in this dream we call life. It is what we could call Lucid Waking, a parallel to Lucid Dreaming, where we are aware that we are in the dream state while dreaming. Lucid Waking takes us away from the preoccupations of work, family, and friends into the mystery of our existence.

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The key to the gate of Lucid Waking is to hold in mind the state we experience when we look up at a star-filled sky and realize that we exist among the multitude of stars in the universe and are momentarily transfixed by the Cosmic questions of: "Where am I?" "What am I?" "Why am I here?" Lucid Waking is to realize that you exist. It is to realize that we are part of the immense phenomena that we call the universe.

For students of mysticism, Lucid Waking is also to remember that we take part in an Infinite Intelligence that underlies all that we see and experience. It is to understand that we are part of





something that has had no beginning and has no end. It simply IS, always has been, and always will be. It is to find rest in that we are a part of that which is beyond time and eternal.

Focusing on the infinite aspect of our being opens new doors of awareness of our relationship with the Cosmic Intelligence, which most people call God or the Divine. We experience the vibrant connection between the macrocosm and the microcosm that bridges the Infinite Intelligence and our seemingly infinitesimal self.

Just as there are techniques for cultivating Lucid Dreaming, we can employ tools to cultivate Lucid Waking. However, in making use of such tools, it is important to slowly build on using them to allow the mind, our personal mental structure, to become progressively at ease with this expansion of awareness. Lucid Waking means adding to our framework of reality moving toward a previously seemingly incomprehensible unknown that we heretofore have found to be overwhelming, as indicated by the feeling of awe we get upon the contemplation of the unknown presented in a vast night sky filled with innumerable stars. While inspired by the sight, we typically retreat from it and its unknown implications,

returning to the comfort of thoughts related to more familiar elements of everyday life. Nonetheless, it is possible to build up our capacity to sustain longer intervals of such contemplation through regular gentle extension of our pre-existing mental and emotional boundaries. This practice is not unlike slowly building up physical strength in weight training. Too much weight lifted too soon can lead to harm, while progressive increases in weight with proper periods of rest in between can steadily and safely increase our capacity. Unlike the dangers accompanying hallucinogenic drugs, the Rosicrucian precept that “evolution not revolution leads to lasting change” is particularly applicable to this work.

The heart of these tools is remembering. It is bringing back to mind that you exist. One approach to doing this is with eyes open, mentally repeat “I am” or “Am” or “I exist” or some other simple words with similar meaning. Looking at a candle flame from a distance can be a useful visual sight. When doing this exercise, don’t reflect on any context. Reflecting on possible contexts will take you away from the goal of the exercise, which is to spend time in pure awareness without the conditioning of other thoughts. We want to have an “empty” mind except for it being occupied by awareness. When thoughts intrude, as they invariably will, simply come back to your focus on awareness. Do this exercise for five to ten minutes and then transition into whatever method of meditation that you find most compatible personally or return to your regular activities.

When watching or hearing news of world events, no matter how disturbing, remind yourself that everything takes place within the Consciousness of God, the Cosmic Consciousness. As the Master Jesus put it (Matt. 10:29-30), “Are not two



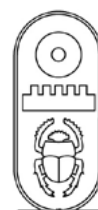
sparrows sold for a penny? Yet none of them will fall to the earth without your father. Even the hairs of your head are each counted.” Or from the words of Acts (17:28), “In him [It] we live and move and are.” The truth of these statements is reflected in one of the hallmarks of Cosmic Consciousness, as reported by those who have experienced it, namely the realization of the imminent presence of the Divine Intelligence throughout all reality.

Another tool for helping to focus on awareness is by mentally asking yourself with eyes wide open the following question, “Why is there something rather than nothing?” The intent here is not to answer the question, but to ponder it. Let it sink in. Let it remind you that you exist versus non-existence. Momentarily feel your place in eternity, outside of time, without beginning or ending. Just recognize that you exist. Repeat the prompt several times, for as long as you are comfortable, to bring your mind back to focusing on awareness.

Various experiences in nature can bring us to a heightened state of awareness and consideration of our place in the universe. When given the opportunity to be in such a setting, whether a star-filled sky, a beautiful sunset or sunrise, or a

majestic mountain vista, at the moment it elicits a heightened sense of your being and aliveness, stay with it. As the sensation fades, reinvoké it with the same or similar thoughts that accompanied the experience initially. Repeat the process several times and then turn your consciousness inward through meditation or resume your regular activities. When another opportunity presents itself, repeat the experience.

The tools offered above and others of one’s own design can help with the process of acclimatization of our consciousness to an expanded reality. Initially, in the intentional journey toward Lucid Waking, it is normal to experience our mind’s resistance to it. Our mind clings tightly to the version of reality that we have built up since childhood and which presently enables each of us to navigate conscious experience with reduced anxiety. This is one reason why individuals hold on so tightly to world views they have formed despite being repeatedly exposed to evidence that contradicts those views. Nonetheless, we can slowly stretch the boundaries of our awareness through exercises that incorporate recognition of elements of reality that we have excluded from conscious awareness while adding to our awareness elements of reality that



reduce the accompanying fear that might be aroused through expanded awareness.

For example, humans spend little conscious time throughout most of their lives dwelling on the unavoidability of physical death, or transition as Rosicrucians commonly refer to it, and its relatively imminent nature, except to regularly make choices to avoid its accidental occurrence. Reading about the scientific evidence supporting reincarnation or the continuation of awareness beyond physical death shown through the investigation of near-death experiences can help us incorporate the seeming unknown of death into our conscious awareness while also affirming the continuation of awareness beyond the point of transition. The words of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin reflect this well: “If at death we realize that this life is an illusion, why do we treat it differently now? The nature of things does not change.”

Let us note that meditation in its various forms complements all of these exercises. Meditation gradually loosens

the grip of our physical senses on our consciousness, allowing us to attune our consciousness to other aspects of reality which are ordinarily overwhelmed by the impressions brought to us by our senses. Meditation turns our awareness inward, focusing our awareness on the Knower rather than the known.

To summarize, awareness is the most profound aspect of self, as awareness is of the nature of the soul, which is an extension of the Cosmic Intelligence. The value of its study is pointed to in the words of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, “The door by which the Divine goes out of Itself, It enters the human soul. The door by which the human soul goes out of itself, it enters the understanding.”

Let’s value and cultivate our awareness as the precious gift that it is.

Author’s note: The film *Waking Life*, available on Amazon Prime, is an interesting exploration of topics discussed in this article.

