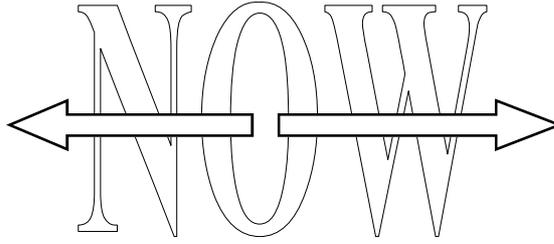


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Meetings
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Issue No. 51
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The Nowletter appears between 10 and 12 times every year and is a vehicle for news and views about awakening to what is really going on. Contributions from readers are considered the most valuable content so please think about letting me have your views, experiences, discoveries and responses .

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SUMARAH: A study of the Art of Living
David Gordon Howe, Ph.D.

We hear and read a lot about being in the present, or the here and now, but what exactly does it mean? The concept appears simple, but its application presents some difficulty for me. *SUMARAH: A study of the Art of Living* is a book about Javanese/Balinese Sufism, but more specifically how they are more directly in touch with reality by learning to live in the present. When Alan approached me to write a review for this book, I was initially reluctant. What qualifications do I have to review this book? None. However, I'm very enthusiastic about this book, as it parallels much of what I'm presently undergoing, and has helped me greatly.

This book is very practical describing techniques and presenting numerous case studies along with the theory. However, I don't believe it can be used as a *do it yourself* book, because participation within a group with experienced guides is necessary to measure progress, and for reality checks. The book is divided into four parts, the first part gives the reader background information about Java, origins of Javanese Sufism, and Maturation Psychology. The second part deals with Sumarah theory with case studies. The third part is about putting the theory into practice, along with numerous case studies. The last part presents the author's personal experience doing fieldwork in Java.

Central to Javanese Sufism is our relationship with *Tuhan* or God. Their concept of God is not that of a personal God, but a God encompassing the totality of life. To be in touch with reality is to be in touch with God. Questioning the existence of God appears ludicrous to them, not unlike questioning the existence of air. The Javanese Sufi's behaviour and way of living can be explained by Maturation psychology described in chapter 2:

Maturation psychology is a mode of living based on the accurate reception of reality. There are a number of constants present in the multitude of such practices over the ages. Open psychologies are based on a broad vision of being which can involve God or Nature or some equivalent notion, and their central concern is knowing and serving this greater sense. Open psychologies focus on increasing respect for and attention to reality, and in order to contain escapist tendencies they

generally involve some practice or discipline that can range from prayer to meditation to various forms of self-abnegation. They are also consistently concerned with imparting a healthy lifestyle.

Maturation psychology is contrasted against Ego psychology of which we are more familiar in the west. Numerous Javanese Sufi schools are devoted to teaching this way of living. This book focuses on the practices of the Sumarah school. What does Sumarah mean? Sumarah literally means to surrender, and is the final phase of the process of opening to reality, described in chapter 6:

The process of opening to reality eventually develops into surrender (Sumarah) to what you have opened to. This evolution in perspective is viewed as a process inherent in the activity itself: learning how to swim will work wonders on your fear of the water. Your life becomes a prayer, a constant prayer that reflects your relationship with existence. The closer you get to "me first", the less proper your prayer becomes. The process of opening reveals the beauty of what you are opening to and this in turn changes your attitude towards existence itself. The relationship that finally comes out in surrender is a return to a childlike, "What is Thy will?", or "What must I do?". In this you are open: it is the attitude of surrender and the only one that does not separate you from reality and bury you in illusions.

The principles underlying the practices of the Sumarah school is best described in chapter 9:

The Sumarah method centers on learning how not to avoid reality and how to receive reality more directly. This entails a gradual increase in awareness or "sensitivity" and in understanding or "selectivity" that together bring an advance in "consciousness", the combination of these two tools. Increases in sensitivity and selectivity are accompanied by an actual boost in perceptual intake. This is a long process, which begins as an intellectual intention and carries on through various stages of ego separation and increasing consciousness until it arrives at

"surrender".

The practices include forms of meditation and abstinences such as fasts. Avoidance habits and tendencies we develop to escape from reality are unlearned through study and self criticism. Feelings and desires are studied not in order to control them, but to become more aware of our needs, strengths and weaknesses. In this way a balance of desires is reached that is more positive and harmonious. The process involved are best summed up in chapter 1:

Taming the ego comes first. Once you know how to do the practice, this is a long but straightforward process. You learn to relax and pay attention, and as a result you stop telling yourself stories, stop exciting or entertaining yourself and filling your senses with fantasies and bootless thinking. You learn not to drift off. You study being here and letting your senses be engaged by what comes, rather than what you wish was or was not present. You begin to serve the harmony, if only by being a bit less out of tune.

This book is for anyone with an interest in a better understanding of being in the present, or the here and now. It is also a fascinating book for those with an interest in learning about Javanese Sufism. I believe that much of what is in this book is very relevant to the process of *Dialogue*. Of particular relevance is a quote on "thought" from chapter 7:

When I am thinking, I am not here;
When I am here, I am not thinking.

And from chapter 6:

The relationship between sensing the world and creating a world with your senses is like that between hearing and talking. If you talk all the time you do not hear much, you do not exchange with others and you do not share with them the hearing of what is here.

I have to admit that I'm very excited about this book, but this may be because of its relevance to my personal development. It is not perfect, and does have flaws including bad English expression. However, I feel that this is a book worth reading.

Francis J Chan.

Note: This doctoral dissertation is only available online via the internet website: <http://www.newageinfo.com/res/spirit.htm>

Response from Lyn Wilmott to Issue No. 50

Thank you and all those who are contributing to NOW, for making it such a powerful magazine. This latest issue (no.50) has given me so much to work with! Fantastic!

Gary Hipworth's explanation about the 'me' being a concept, and the main reason for our separation from each other, is a profound statement. I have been reading such words for the past 30 years by Krishnamurti and others, but for some reason Gary's words jumped out and knocked me sideways. This time I understood at a much deeper level.

I believe two things are operating here, Gary's ability to reach out to people, passing on his knowledge and experience with absolute clarity; and my own expanding consciousness, which is now wide enough to begin to 'eff' the ineffable (as John Wren Lewis says).

It's this second point that I would like to enlarge on. We are told that Enlightenment comes suddenly. Bursting upon us with instantaneous insight, or that it is seemingly being bestowed upon us by some greater force. Despite many elevated words disclaiming what I am about to say, I now realize that there IS a third way. It's the way of a slowly expanding Consciousness.

Over the past few years I have become very aware of this phenomenon taking place inside, but until recently have taken no notice of it because I was still pleading for that inner Godlike explosion of complete understanding and unity talked about by those who have already experienced 'enlightenment'. Now it is dawning on me that there is continuous inner process taking place affecting my five senses. This widening or deepening of consciousness is beyond my capacity for control. I plonk the information in and wait... 2 weeks ...6 months...maybe years later, suddenly full and total understanding is EXPERIENCED. I must emphasise the word 'experienced' because this is beyond all normal intellectual acrobatics - it is experienced (What the Headlessness people call 'seeing')

Examples: After years of intellectual experimentation I now listen to music with my body - or rather - the music is in me, even moves around my body. I no longer hear it coming from a source - I am the music!; these days I'm aware of Nature existing in the round. The sky domes over head, and it is still doming as it curves over and down beyond the horizon. The earth has become part of this curve making me constantly aware of walking or driving on a spherical surface. (This is lost to me when I'm in a city) ; at present I am consciously working with the knowledge that my body is living in 3 dimensional space making me become aware of what is behind me and on both sides. This places my awareness 'in it' instead of having a flat scene

always coming up towards me via my sight. Soon

there will be no need for me to consciously 'do this'. The expansion will take place and I will always be in the world not isolated and separated, just looking in from the flat plane in front of me; working with the concept of Love is being done in a similar manner. Drawing on the physical love I feel for my son, I mentally try to wrap this feeling around everybody and everything I know. Every now and then the process clicks in and I become overwhelmed by universal joy. The more I practice the quicker the 'feeling' seems to well up.

On to Gary's insights:

Thanks to his clarity I now 'understand'. Even though it is still at an intellectual level, it is clear enough to be able to ACCEPT the knowledge that the 'me' is a string of ideas. (Still fills me with joyous amazement when I acknowledge this fact). To assist my expansion process, I am constantly feeding Gary's insights (now mine as well) into my conscious mind. Thinking about the illusion, the separation, watching myself as I react to situations, and people, listening as an outsider to my own communications with others; simply trying to become constantly aware of all of it! At present I am limited to using thought, and I am finding it incredibly difficult to isolate and watch my emotional performance, but sooner or later I shall EXPERIENCE 'me' as a concept. Then the thinking will be replaced by the experience, or the 'seeing'.

Krishnamurti claimed the process of becoming Realized was instantaneous - I now dispute this, but I do not want to debate it in an intellectual way, there is no need to because of my EXPERIENCE. None of my insights or experiences just descend upon me. They have come about due to the gradual widening of the conscious state, and if it has worked for me it must be happening for others. I guess I am suggesting that by consciously using Thought as a tool, some how we impact the brain and an alteration takes place, allowing the deeper levels of understanding (known as unconsciousness) to be recognized consciously. I acknowledge that this expansion is not the switch that turns on Enlightenment but I am suggesting that the slow amplification of the conscious state might prepare the way for the self to eventually be flooded by the Light.

Total realization is still a mystery but I do believe this third way - probably the method most of us use - is worth acknowledging and pursuing because it does bring about real change via actual EXPERIENCE.

Lyn Willmott

Warwick meets Douglas Harding

In January Warwick went to Nacton where he met Douglas Harding and Douglas's wife Catherine. All the earlier reports from Warwick have been printed as they arrived by email without editorial interference.

However, as this particular event involves a personal, one to one exchange, I decided to paraphrase Warwick's report and thereby avoid the necessity of asking Douglas for his 'version' of events. I have made the changes with Warwick's approval.

Ed.

Warwick reported that he was well received by Douglas and Catherine who met him at the station and provided a fine lunch. At the outset he explained to Douglas that he had seen very clearly what he is saying when doing the 'eyes closed' experiment, but that his main method, the pointing technique, has no effect on him.

Immediately Douglas said that it's not good enough to grasp it with your eyes shut, you have to be able to see it with your eyes open. We live our ordinary lives with our eyes open so we have to be able to see it with our eyes open. Just grasping it with your eyes shut is simply an escape from reality. He said he would take Warwick through some of the experiments after lunch and show him how you "see" with eyes open.

During the lunch Douglas emphasised, over and over, that it is no good just taking someone else's word for it, you have to see for yourself. Warwick agreed heartily with this and asked Douglas about the possible complementary natures of psychotherapy and headlessness. His reply was something like, "Psychotherapy deals with emotions - and emotions come and go and you can't have any control over them, but where you can exercise control is this, you can put your emotions to one side and you can just "see". You notice the absence of head on your shoulders and the empty space. At some time during lunch Douglas spoke about the way that "seeing" makes it possible to disappear in favour of the other. Warwick said he had previously, when Catherine and he were talking, got the feeling that I was about to disappear, leaving only an awareness of Catherine's face.

After lunch they got out the equipment,(the piece of cardboard with the little mirror down at the bottom), and went through a few of the experiments. But the way Warwick saw, afterwards, was the same as the way he had seen before.

Douglas's basic point is that you see the truth about who you really are when you see that you have no head. He states, quite vehemently, that this is the "truth." He says that it is simply and obviously true. For instance he said, "Now look around the room and tell me how many heads there are in this room." If there are three people then the answer is that there are two heads. He says, again quite vehemently, that it's just a matter of simple counting; and it's obvious, on present evidence, that there are only two heads here. .

Warwick and Douglas completed a few of the exercises but nothing happened. Douglas kept insisting that it is simple and obvious and all you have to do is be honest to "see" it. But Warwick didn't see it.

After a while the attempts to get Warwick to "see" were dropped; they had a cup of coffee and a chat. They were talking about void, emptiness. Now, because Warwick has had this experience of immense silence, beginning when he was a very small boy on the plains of Western Queensland, and more recently up in the Blue Mountains when a friend of his remarked, "Isn't the silence deafening?", and also during the Harding closed eye exercise; and because he believes that silence and emptiness are different aspects of the same thing, he was relaxed about talking about emptiness. So they talked for a while, maybe ten minutes or so, and then Douglas shook his head and said "Understanding it doesn't mean anything. You can understand it, you can be able to talk about it, but if you can't "see" it then it doesn't mean a thing.

I found Warwick's experience very helpful because, at the time, and in response to a similar query, I was wrestling with the question of headlessness as metaphor or fact. I also appreciate his honesty in laying out his difficulty for us all to pick over because his experience is that of most people. I am intrigued that he finds the closed-eye experiment works for him yet the 'open-eyed' experiments don't. I look forward to exploring this with him and with anyone else who is interested on his return. Thank you Warwick!

I lifted the following extract from the Autumn/Winter 1998 edition of 'The Link' produced by Krishnamurti Link International. I thought it a wonderful expression of the essence of K's teaching and it also struck me as an equally fine expression of what headlessness is about.

Ed.

Krishnamurti and Headlessness

Truths made to size are mere psychological commodities and as such based on the pursuit of personally gratifying illusions. Truth has no author: it is there for those who can see. It requires an act of immediate, i.e. unmediated, perception. K insisted on this ad nauseam as one of the fundamental keys to human freedom.

That is why he (Krishnamurti) rejected scholarly references, to the point of regretting that his listeners had ever heard or read anything about what he was saying, including his own previous talks and published works. For him the issue was clear: truth is now and the now is beyond the pale of knowledge, so the perception of truth requires an unconditioned and innocent approach, the approach of unknowing,

Krishnamurti embodied this immediacy of seeing and therefore denied all authority in this field, including his own. Truth for him is an act of supreme honesty and aloneness. Truth has no tradition, for it's ever in the present and tradition is the past. The truth, therefore, is to be discovered from moment to moment in the unbiased observation of what is.

This quality of direct perception is the teacher and the teachings.

Javier Gomez Rodriguez, October 1998

Response from Rome Warren to Issue Number 50

As usual I am innerly responding to NOW which is invariably entertaining, sometimes perceptive and/or challenging; frequently interesting. Generally basking in the aftermath, there is the intention of sending in a written contribution, then my 'Projects' take over.

My responses, of course are in synch with my reading and frequently statements that 'ring false' are clarified in subsequent paragraphs when it becomes obvious we need a new language! The words of a commercially obsessed world are not viable and the deliberately distorted words ("ethnic cleansing" war "collateral damage" etc., are positively obscene but globally accepted).

'Wrong' words or 'right' words with 'wrong' meaning diminish understanding at ANY level as though in a foreign language, whether they are spoken or written and, it seems to me, NOW is a time in history when we should be considering any changes conspiracy (breathing together) if ever there is to be true communication or communion.

This time I'm going to jot down comments as I read and you are welcome to deal with them however you like - including waste disposal! So here goes!

"The Lightness of Life" It is not so much that the brain acts as a 'generator' as it is an igniter. The ignition is switched on by thinking which triggers vibrations and chemicals throughout the organism; and the resonance creates waves of feelings which may, or may not, be emoted as emotional response in external action. Feeling is the tide of inner flow which can be interpreted by ego - thought - brain (which have no depth of feeling in their mechanism) as 'disturbance', 'sentiment', 'romanticism', etc., and played out (played) as emotion.

Yes, thinking 'disturbs' the body and science has now proven that it expends more energy than running a in a marathon. Thought is a wastage of energy and expender of chemicals which affect health but feelings create and generate energy; they are certainly not the

same as thought. (Though emotions are thought driven)

Should we get it clear that we all mean the same thing when we refer to thought, emotion, and feelings as being distinctly different or do others see them as indivisible.

Yes, the cause of all suffering is a 'thought -burdened' brain' and most people carry this burden. One only has to meditate with others to be driven crazy by the static from their brains' vibrations. None of us seriously doubts this.

The key word in regard to doubters, as used by Peter, is belief, which of course is thought. All belief is an illusion so, in a way, the brain though still live as an organ, instantly capable of solving complex problems and able to function perfectly as a mechanism, is not 'brain dead' simply because it no longer functions as a thinker EXCEPT WHEN NEEDED. It simply stops weaving illusions and delusions.

The death of the thinker who dreams up this trivia and regards it as the truth is no loss to anyone. Most of us ENJOY thinking and that is fine so long as we regard it as a form of entertainment, and use it to CONSCIOUSLY create illusions which we do not expect to be regarded as truth. That is why all opinions are bunkum UNLESS they are presented as unadorned descriptions of actual inperience and direct observation free of conditioning.

'Factual knowledge': here I have another problem of translation. Knowledge and ignorance are not opposites but inseparable companions. (It's impossible to know everything) This means the accumulation of knowledge and actual 'knowing' are completely different.

Should we use different terms for the acquisition of knowledge and inner or instinctive 'knowing' which bear no relationship whatever, as Peter so ably points out? I generally wimp out on this by referring to what Peter calls 'factual knowledge' as observation or awareness. I don't refer to what he calls 'reactive knowledge' as 'knowledge' at all, but simply reactions as they are more usually the result of ignorance (or very limited knowledge).

Again, what he calls 'light knowledge' is, for me, the dropping of knowledge (which is light because it results in instinctive, intuitive responses). Thought/knowledge exist only when required for appropriate purpose and they never need to be carried as they can be called upon as required.

As I see it, the ego can reincarnate every day to function in modern society when it needs to utilise thought, knowledge, memory, etc., by use of the brain,

when needed. The rest of the time the entire organism - and its well-being both physically and subtly, through sensitivity and feelings, it operates at optimum level through the mind.

The feckless, indoctrinated, misuse of brain and mind interchangeably will continue to confuse and mislead humanity forever unless they are differentiated.

Direct observation makes it clear: the brain is a perishable, finite, unfeeling bodily organ, receptive to vibrations. Its 'job' is to create what it perceives as order out of chaos, through translation, interpretation and some kind of assembly with which the ego can formulate ideas and opinions (think) then communicate them.

The mind is abiding, infinite, intangible, light, the holistic, integrated witness within and without, seamless and unseparated from Universal consciousness and the Universal Light (God or whatever one wants to call it), a part of the whole like a droplet in the ocean - with access to All Truth, All Understanding.

Questions exist - and continue to plague us - until we perceive that every question is part of a hologram and the answer is the missing factor. Ask a clear question and the answer is obvious, not from thought or analysis but because the whole is seen as soon as the question is seen with clarity. So long as a question is partial, the answer is never revealed other than partially, so the question nags.

Monopoly - Modern Fables No. 7

"we think that it ought to be otherwise"...this is spot-on to say we think we are separate. We think our illusions are actual, the game is a game that life is giving but, so long as it is thought, it is ALL illusion. Is this why we say we are alive (a-live, neither living nor dead); an acknowledgment to ourselves that our illusions are not actual?

Thought is separation. Separation is thought. When the thinker is 'dead', there is no separation. When we try to recapture that oceanic feeling, it is the thinker that is chasing the inperience and therefore increasing the isolation. (And yes, I know; I was there for most of my life)

So how do we kill off the thinker AND isolation?

Years ago, a Hindu told me that Indians had been studying this for thousands of years and are still doing the same, despite meditation. Very earnestly, he told me he expected to spend his entire life trying to "find a way to stop thought without violence" and could I make any suggestion.

I popped the question to the Universe and the response was immediate. "drop maintenance". It was the first time (because I'd never considered it) that ALL conditioning, from cradle to grave, is to think every thought to its logical conclusion.

Immediately (is there any other time than immediate?) I observed the beginning of thought. The split second it came in, even if it was only one or two words, I did not maintain it. Instead, I performed some action, or looked at the view from my window.

Literally, within hours all excess thinking was gone. My head was so silent I could hear the singing of Nature. Instead of internal chatter insights flared like sparks of fire, clear and thrilling and, in between, the space of light and dark. No thought. After all the tricks the thinker had devised to retain continuity, all gone. Nothing remained.

No, I didn't lose my memory, develop amnesia, even temporarily, or go ga-ga. I simply stopped using thought except when I need to in order to live in this world or communicate. There has never been any sense of separation since.

Two particular subsequent insights may be needed to complete the picture. Language problems again: Reality and Actuality are unrelated. "Yes" you say, I realise that". The function of the thinker's brain is to realise (make real) whatever it perceives as 'truth' even its own delusions. Every person on the planet creates his/her own world, peoples it with what it chooses to create as its own population and every other thought of its own imagining. We then will fight to the death to protect this illusory world which is just one of millions.

And, because of bacteria etc., we not only create our own world but each of us is a walking universe with most 'occupants' unaware of each other's existence. Actually Actuality is the truth of what is, as it is, prior to the tampering of thought.

The Second Insight (which you've printed in NOW): Every thing is in Emergence. Without Emergence there is no thing. The entire 'material' world exists in a state of pulsation: material - immaterial; visible-invisible; manifest - unmanifest. The words don't matter. This is just a statement of fact.

Oh, yes - and the scientists have it wrong about the expanding universe. The Emergency of Emergence is to understand what it means. The universe is subject to the same natural law of Emergence. IT is a breathing organism and, as with all else breathes in (expansion) breathes out (contraction). The difference lies in timing of studies and how many centuries or millennia will show the universe to be in a state of contraction, whereupon another generation will proclaim it to be a

contracting universe.

Therapy and Headlessness. Maybe we are all contemplating the same thing - and everything else is simply entertainment which we like to regard as serious study? Consider this: the content of consciousness is its content: when the content is content does anything else matter?

Gary Hipworth replies: Wow! Nothing more to say. As usual he writes from inperience and not ideas. My empathy with what he writes probably has a lot to do with the death of Gary! As a result of (less) serious trauma the same has occurred to me three times. Each time NOTHING remained of the previous 'me'. Even to recall events has no more resonance in 'me' than the memory of fiction I've written or films I've seen.

At one time I considered I might actually be out of my tree (even though no one else seemed to think so) then someone refused to read my palm because he saw something "too disturbing". A stranger to him, it took me ages to convince him to go ahead because what awful things he saw ahead for me would be nothing to what I might imagine. (So, yes : I lied)

It turned out it was disturbing for him, not me! He didn't believe (think) very much about anything. Unlike him, some of the things that sound like 'concepts' to him are not to me because of the extraordinary inperiences of my own life (this incarnation). I figure the reason why I've been on the receiving end of so much phenomena is that I was previously (in all those lives), the world's greatest sceptic. Even now, after a veritable feast, I still question everything 'new' when it happens (if it appears to be paranormal) but only if I intend to share it with someone as people seem to need/demand explanations.

To be honest, what is 'mystical experiences' or the 'paranormal' seem more normal because they are more fundamental than reality which is polluted by thought. As I see it, if there is a motive to see truth the motive itself is thought/belief. The ONLY way to see Truth is to look at life as is = ising without interpretation.

Continuity 2. from Warwick It seems to me that the last sentence sums up what the writer's friends are actually doing. They are participants in life while living it whereas most people are onlookers of life while thinking about it.

Rome Warren

Variety - the Spice of Enlightenment

After reading your never-a-dull-moment last issue (What is Enlightenment), I found myself repeating the famous words of Omar Khayam:

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
 Doctor and saint, and heard great argument
 About it and about, but evermore
 Came out by that same door wherein I went.

Thus the Avaitists tell us that:
 Enlightenment means realizing that. " you are not the doer. "
 Enlightenment means realizing that the Absolute is the only doer.
 Enlightenment means realizing that your *are* THAT .
 So - enlightenment leaves you back as the doer after all!

Then Peter Masfield tells us that in the original Buddhist teaching:

The Noble Eightfold Path leads to enlightenment.
 The first step of that path is a a right view of Reality
 A right view of Reality is possible only after enlightenment.
 So - the path to enlightenment can't start until it's completed.

And much more in the same circular vein.

But don't get me wrong, to me this isn't depressing at all. On the contrary, it strikes me as possibly pointing towards a new line of enquiry in your journal's very welcome search for "evidence-based enlightenment." I've always found that when circularity occurs; I am using words which have no meaning in my *lived* experience.

In this particular case, terms like Absolute, non-dual, spiritual "attainment, " Emptiness, Unity, etc., and of course Enlightenment itself, will continue to fall back on themselves so long as they are used in the abstract to describe generalities, because then *no one* "really knows what they're talking about."

To break this cycle, we need to get more specific . This is why my partner Ann Faraday and I make backbreaking efforts to follow the advice of Alan Watts to "eff the ineffable" whenever we attempt to describe our "enlightenment" experiences. For example when I describe mine in terms of knowing myself as Eternity Johning (see WIE, Vol 4, Number 2, Summer 1995), is it the same as Ann's experience of what she calls "no self"? Both of us are trying to express the *feeling* of the experience instead of talking in abstractions. Mine feels very much like a sense of the Absolute as loving *Fullness*, while Ann's terminology seems to be expressing a felt sense of its *Emptiness* of selfhood. Could it be that enlightenment reflects differing *aspects* of the Absolute, rather than a monolithic Reality which has to be either one thing or the other?

And if we sometimes behave in less than perfect ways, not always completely selfless, compassionate or dignified, does this organ that we are not Really Enlightened or does it mean that we have just "slipped out" for a moment or two? Or longer? Does it bother us? Or do we feel that Absolutely everything is Absolutely OK to the Absolute?

These are the kind of specific and personal questions that need to be asked of anyone claiming "enlightenment." And if, as it seems to me, variety is not only the spice of life but also its very purpose and delight, then surely the Absolute, Eternity or whatever revels in differences and rough edges rather than any kind of standardized perfection.

Which may be why the Eternity-experience, as I prefer to call it, has different effects on different people's lives - leading some to the dharma, some to minister to the dying, some to sail around the world, some to write a novel, and others perhaps simply to become better parents or children (though I've yet to hear of an Enlightened One taking up stockbroking or real estate.) And if Omar Khayyam is moved to retreat peacefully with his book of verse beneath a bough, with a loaf of bread, a jug of wine, and Thou beside him singing in the wilderness - well I'm sure that's just fine with Eternity!

*(Prof) John Wren Lewis, School of Studies in religion,
 University of Sydney*

P.S. Ann would probably have written this letter quite differently!

The above letter first appeared in the current edition of "What is Enlightenment" magazine and is reprinted here with the author's permission.

Correction

Enid has pointed out a mistake I made in transcribing her report of the Satish Kumar visit in Nowletter 49. It was in the second paragraph, reprinted below:

The second is our relationship with society: in this we give our labour and our possessions and we give with gratitude. Satish has walked around India asking rich landowners to give land to the poor. "That's a tall order" said Phillip Adams in an ABC interview, to which Satish replied, "But this was India. And they gave it". When we give, we give with gratitude to the great civilisation we are a part of, and we always get back more than we receive. This is replenishment.

The last but one sentence should read: When we give, we give with gratitude to the great civilisation we are a part of, and we always get back more than we receive. This should read - give more than we receive - give back not get back.

Warwick meets Francis

Yesterday, we went to the first day of Francis's retreat. You have to imagine a young, slim, elegant Frenchman. Now, I know he must be in his late 40's at least, but he is young in appearance, young in manner, and so approachable, warm, easy to be with, that at times he is almost schoolboyish.

Francis started by saying something like, "I come here just to say something very simple. I'm not an awakened person, I'm not an enlightened person, and I don't know what zese words mean. But what I know and what I have to say is that I'm happy. The only thing I talk about is this happiness. This happiness is very strange because it has no traceable origin. So I know I'm happy, but I cannot tell you why. I came to contact this happiness when I understood that all the alleged reasons for happiness that I could find were lies. Zese body ees not young any longer, and my bank account is not the way it used to be when I was a yuppy. But there is this happiness. What is going to happen in the next years and hours I don't know."

Someone said something like, "Well, you can't just be happy all the time." which seemed to me to be a pretty acute observation, and he said:- "It's not a happiness that has an opposite. If something happens and my reaction is, "I don't like this", I see at once that it doesn't matter, and I am still happy. I don't say that I'm perfect. That's why I don't understand what perfect enlightenment means. To me it sounds suspicious."

He spoke about the trap of identifying happiness with an object, for if the object is not there the happiness is gone; and the same with health, relationships, jobs and the like. He said that for him the old patterns of "like" and "dislike" can recur, (although they don't in fact recur with the same intensity) but the difference is that he doesn't take them seriously.

Someone asked that if you were happy consistently would that mean you were enlightened?

Francis was very droll: "Oh yes; even if you were happy 95% of the time. I would even cut a deal for 90%"

He said that it is not necessary that there be a huge explosion to reveal this happiness, maybe that's necessary for very cynical and resistant people; the main thing is that this flower of happiness grows. He said that in his case it sometimes happened that what was given was taken away, but never completely, and that after a few years it became very stable. (I gather that he did have an experience of illumination at a particular time, that he had already understood, intellectually, the nature of who he was, but that it hadn't penetrated emotionally, and that it was when it penetrated emotionally that the turning point was reached.)

I said that I had the idea that in order to be happy it is necessary to know who you are. I wasn't exactly sure how I had got that idea, whether it was mine or borrowed. And I said that I had some ideas about who I am, but I'm not sure about them either.

He said, amongst other things, that he would give me a clue; that who I am is happiness; that to discover who I am and to discover happiness is the same thing. The problem, he said, is to believe that you are something else than happiness.

He said later that happiness is not a feeling. "A feeling is the impact of happiness in your body. The feeling has a colour but that from which it comes is without colour, pure light."

I brought up the situation of being in love; then one can cease striving to be someone, one is already loved, one doesn't have to do anything to earn it, one can relax.

He said, "It is the constant struggle, generated by fear and desire, the struggle to manufacture happiness, that only covers it up. The moment the struggle temporarily vanishes because I have acquired the desired object, then there is a blue hole between the clouds. But I attribute the presence of the sky to the digging or drilling of a hole. So I keep digging blue holes in the clouds in order to manufacture blue sky."

W : This doesn't seem absurd to me. It seems like a reasonable thing to do. I know everybody is laughing but I'm not laughing it still does seem to be a reasonable thing to do.

F: To drill blue holes?

W: To dissipate whatever it is that separates one from the sky.

F: I would tend to agree with you, provided - we have the understanding of the true nature - of the blue sky. In other words, provided we know that the blue sky is not made of a special kind of cloud which is blue, at the same level as the clouds, but rather is the entire sky, of which all clouds are made, ultimately. The clouds are part of the sky but the blue hole is not part of the clouds.

Later

I've just had a long talk with Francis in the sitting room. There are three things I'd like to tell you about.

1 He told me about the incident during which his self - realization happened.

2He challenged my statement that I am here and he is there

3We went over the Douglas Harding closed eye

experiment, which he used as a guided meditation this afternoon. I must add that when I mentioned that his guided meditation was the same as the DEH experiment, he said that he didn't know of Douglas's experiment.

Let's go to the incident during which his self-realization happened. He was listening to some sacred music, I think it was Indian sacred music. He was already very involved with the search for God, and he could feel the holiness of this music. He wanted to become one with it, but he could feel some disturbance, some small disturbance that was a hindrance. He decided, if that is the appropriate way of saying things, that he would see just what this disturbance was; instead of trying to avoid or bypass it he would focus on it. Immediately it grew to enormous proportions. It was as if some minor irritant such as a grain of sand in your shoe grew to be the size of having your leg caught in the cogs of a huge machine and being torn off. This new entity was elemental fear. As he watched it it became the fear of immediate death and at the same time it crystallised into the thought "I". He decided, if that's the correct way of putting it, that he would stay with this fearsome thought, this experience that threatened immediate extinction, even if it resulted in his extinction he would stay with it. And when he had completely faced it it dissolved into immortality, absolute purity, the Divine without contamination..

He told this story during the course of a discussion during which he challenged my statement that I was here and he there. He insisted that there was no distance, no separation. I said that it seemed to me that there incontrovertibly was. He insisted that there wasn't. So I said, "Well, maybe there is some category error going on here. I know that in one frame of reference I am 57 years old. And in another frame of reference I have no age, and no qualities."

He was very pleased at that and said, "Yes, one is the physical, or relative, and the other is the realm of consciousness, which is absolute. If you take your stand in the absolute realm of consciousness, then there is no distance between you and me."

So we played around with these two ways of perceiving. We did the closed eye experiment, and all the sounds that arose were within me, but none of them, not even the sound of my own voice speaking, was mine. Nor did the accumulation of disparate phenomena, sounds, touch sensations, pressures, etc, add up to a me; they remained an accumulation of sensations arising and disappearing in the silence, like vegetables in a vegetable soup. But when I opened my eyes he became that person over there. So he gave me some suggestions to play with, to enter into this perception with my eyes closed and then carry it with me to the realm of sight that comes into existence

when I open my eyes, with the visual sensations simply being other vegetables in the soup. Wendy Joy has already given me, I must add, similar advice.

We had a lot of discussion about what this means, in terms of intimacy, if you allow someone into you in this way. I observed that it occasioned a fear on my part that others would discover embarrassing things about me. That I had a fear that this kind of intimacy would assume a sexual dimension. He said that he was surprised that someone who had been so long a Sannyasin would have such a puritanical fear. It was a very long discussion.

We also had an amazing discussion last night. That was when I first told him that I knew that I was not 57 years old, that I was no age. That was a very good starting point. He asked a lot of Socratic questions; "How did I know that?" "I just new, right?" "And what about the part of me that's ageless? Is it separate? Is there any separation? Yes, in our bodies and personalities, but if we are able to see beyond those aspects, then our bodies and personalities disappear, leaving only the essential innerness, which is ageless and qualityless, and which is not different between you and me, but is the same entity, or non - entity, in you and me.

I told him that it was like the thought that inspired me to write to Sanji that she is like a Cheshire kitten, that slowly disappears, leaving only a smile, and a few scratch marks. He was delighted with that. He found it a perfect metaphor.

We had a long, long discussion that included art and architecture and beauty. We each of us had some red wine, and at the end of the discussion, around 2 in the morning, I mentioned that I would love to be able to tell all my friends about the wonderful discoveries I had made but unfortunately I had forgotten everything.

He replied, "Forget zee cat, just remember zee smile."

Warwick Wakefield

Editor's Note

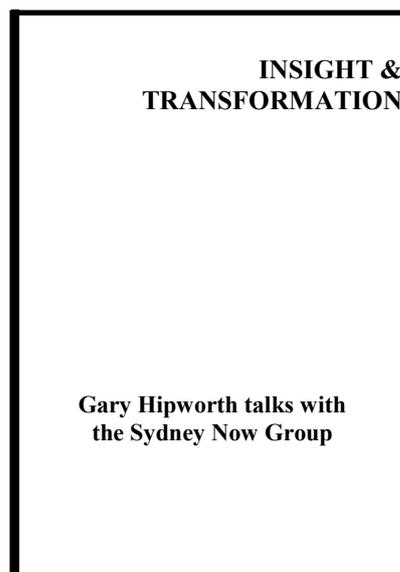
There was a very positive response to the last issue and most of your feedback appears in this edition. Thanks to all local contributors and our roving reporter Warwick who continues to share his adventures with us. Also those of you who have sent in material which has not yet been published. Please keep it coming.

The Gary Hipworth transcripts are now available, see below. As a consequence of my last computer crash I had to rebuild the mailing list and I discovered at least one person was left out of the rebuild. If you know of anyone else who is complaining that we haven't sent anything out for a few months please tell me.

The next Headless workshop will be on the weekend

of Sunday 2 May unless we organise a 'special' between now and then. (*I was wondering about turning the next workshop into a headless weekend at Glen Davis. It would be from the night of Friday 30 April to the evening of Sunday the 2 May. If you are interested please let me know.*)

(02) 9419 7394

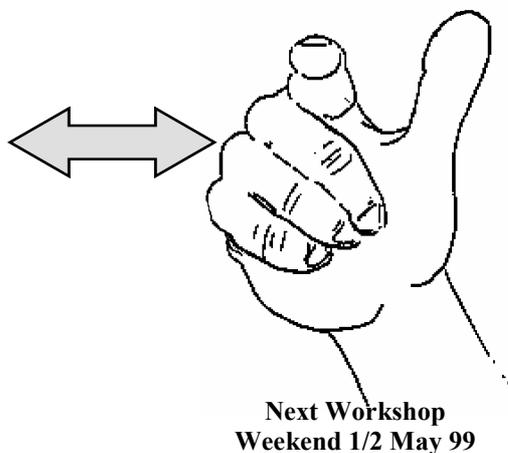


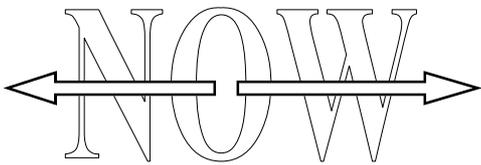
Record of the October Gathering

I was at the gathering and I have listened to the tapes for hours throughout the transcribing process so you could say I have been heavily over exposed. But reading through the final draft in its printed form there was a sense of wholeness which gave it an even greater impact than I had thought possible from the written word. I think it is a really valuable document. This is due primarily to the content, what Gary had to say, but it is enhanced, I think, by the interaction: the queries, questions and discussion. I wondered what I was doing on occasions during the preparation process but now I see.

Copies of the transcript which is a 42 page, indexed document are available from me at 81, Greville St., Chatswood, 2067 for the cost of printing and binding which is \$7.50. Postage within Australia is \$2.50 extra. (\$10 postage paid)

Alan Mann





If unable to deliver please return to:

81 Greville Street, Chatswood 2067

DIALOGUE MEETINGS SYDNEY AREA				
LOCATION	DAY OF MONTH	MEETING PLACE	TIME & CONTACT	Phone Nos.
North Ryde	First Saturday	Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road North Ryde	12.30pm Barry Hora	0243 622 843
Clontarf	First Wednesday	49 Peronne Avenue Clontarf	7.30pm Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379 0415 410 127
City	Third Saturday	Theosophical Society Level 2, 484 Kent St., City	2.30pm Barry Hora	0243 622 843
Chatswood	Third Sunday	81 Greville St. (off Fullers Rd) Chatswood	10.30 am Alan & Margot Mann	02 9419 7394
Clontarf	Fourth Sunday	49 Peronne Avenue Clontarf	11am Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379 018 410 127