

Experience, Belief, Trust, Intuition and Realization (Liberation)

A little nondual Dictionary

In my talks I often use sentences like: we don't need to believe this, but we need to realize this. For instance in: Oneness and love are not a belief, but a realization. Or sentences like: this is only an experience. For instance in: we can experience a flash of enlightenment (*satori*), but this is only what it is, an experience. It is not a realization. And often I talk about intuition, as opposed to thought, or knowledge. For instance when I say that we cannot solve some existential problem with the mind, we cannot think out a solution for this, we need to trust our intuition.

It is sometimes hard to explain the differences, because although most readers will have an idea of what intuition is, or an experience, but not many have realized the Oneness of being. They might however had moments of *satori* when they felt the absence of time and space, an awe for nature or god, a certain unexplainable deep joy rising from within. But how to explain how all these relate?

Revisiting The Santa Clausness of Life

Without giving the all encompassing answer, for this is a matter of realization also, I recently thought of another way of explaining this. I re-read my Tale about The Santa Clausness of Life. And in that, I found part of the answer I hope. It reads like this.

When we were young, we believed in Santa Claus (SC). This is the prototype of belief. It is not an innate thing, because babies do not believe in SC. So the children who do, have learned this. It is a process of conditioning, imitation, indoctrination even, if you like. It comes by words and by the doings of our parents. And by the belief that they are right. And by "proof", in the form of SC appearing in our lives, we can see him, hear him, he gives us presents – what is not to believe in that? We can say that there is the experience of (believing in) SC. The problem with proof is, that it is a story as well, and it can (and invariably will) turn out to be incomplete or false. Another story can come along, and then the belief needs to change to replace the old story for the new one. It is a process of change, circumstances, coming and going. In Hindu philosophy they would say: it is not real, it is illusory (like an illusion) for it is not permanent. Reality is that what is permanent. Only the Self is permanent. With this, they refer to the source of all.

Now, after the sorry truth is explained to the poor child that SC does not exist, that he was a lie, a tale, a story that our parents wanted us to believe in for whatever reasons they have (tradition, humor, education, social habit), the belief in SC ends. This is typical for belief. It is transient. And different persons can have different beliefs about the same experience. Some children still believe in SC, and some don't. This leads to separation. This is contrary to trust, for trust unites and is timeless.

No new belief? Realization!

Most beliefs end because they are modified or replaced by another belief in something else. But in the case of SC, this else is not a new belief. There is not another figure that replaces SC, he is not replaced by the Bogyman, there is only the ending of the belief in SC. What comes now, is the not-believing in him. Or the not believing - period. Unlike the start of a new belief, which will also end some time, this non-belief in SC is permanent. SC has left the building for good. There is nothing to replace him. No-thing. This is a realization, a revelation if you will. It doesn't come and go. Most people are not returning to the belief in SC ever again.

Experiences of something can be turned into a belief by the mind, but experiences of no-thing need no belief. It is impossible to believe in something that is not there. These revelations are realized, self-evident, beyond mind and reasoning. Now there is trust. The child fully realizes that there is No-Santa-Claus (No-SC) Ever. And there was none in the first place. This is why in Hindu philosophy Oneness is reached by realizing emptiness, which is the Nirvana of Buddhism and the Moksha of Hinduism. Not this, not that (*neti-neti*). If there is no-thing, the mind cannot cling to it and return to claim it. All these no-beliefs, once realized fully, are permanent. And this way a person can peel off every belief like the layers of an onion, and in the end there is the permanent revelation of nothingness (no-onion). The fulness of life, or the emptiness of *Nirvana*. Of course, the followers of the Buddha (like the followers of Jesus) messed up this communication completely by starting an organized religion (Christianity; and Buddhism, which in the words of *Alan Watts (1915-1973)* is "*Hinduism stripped for export*") in which they turned the Buddha and no-thing into a person and into nothing-ness, which is a thing again. And then they were back where they started, with belief and transience instead of trust and timeless realization.

Unless you attach to Emptiness

In the words of *Ram Dass (1931-2019)*: they got attached to emptiness. This is what the mind does. It needs something to organize, otherwise it can't exist. Every bit of no-belief creates a bit of space in the structure of the mind, where it feels weakened. Immediately, the mind's repair shop comes to the rescue and tries to fill up this space with a new belief or with attachments to close the chain that forms the identity of Me. And when no new belief is readily available, it will start constructing one, or even attach itself to the emptiness. It will never rest in trying to do this. For the mind, Idleness is the Devil's pillow. It is very hard for the mind to stay away. Much harder than for SC.

Intuition leads to realization; experience can go either way

There is also a short period in time between those phases of experience of something (SC) and realization (No-SC). In this timeframe, many child still sort of believes in SC for purposes of convenience and doubt. He/she doesn't know for sure anymore that SC is real, but there is no definite proof to sustain this doubt and it still clings to the presents and festivity. But there is also a beginning of another story, the suspicion that SC in fact sounds very much like uncle Bob (who is a thing too, but with no presents he will not be attractive to cling to and will soon be forgotten). And there is the strange thing that SC's seem to appear everywhere in the country at the same time in different places, and on TV and in the mall. This is intuition. Somewhere between the thoughts in the mind of the child, there is a space that gives rise to a gut feeling that this is all a story, an illusion, that it is not true. Intuition can lead to a realization, like mind and thoughts always only lead to a belief. Experience can go either way. It can be temporal and replaced by the thought or abstraction, when the mind thinks it can explain it and fit it into our memory and set of beliefs (or in the strong belief of something contrary). If not, it can turn out into a realization, when the mind is blown away with it and cannot reduce it to a belief or abstraction. Then it becomes permanent. Mostly this happens when the knowledge of some-thing (SC) is replaced by the realization of no-thing (No-SC). When the mind can, it will always try to replace the belief in one thing for the new (and "better") belief in another thing, for it exists only by believing in things (thoughts). Only when the mind doesn't succeed in this, emptiness will persist and a realization happens.

Liberation is permanent and all encompassing

Liberation or enlightenment happens when the mind is completely blown away, and the entire story of Me (which is like SC, only it is about all thoughts, beliefs and identifications of separation together) stops, is seen through. The illusion of contraction, caused by the personal separation of the mind,

dissolves. What remains is reality, pure and unfiltered, not perceived through the interface of the mind, but full on. There is only what is. No person or identity to own it. There are only pure experiences left that come and go, like before, but now no one is left to claim them as his/her own. The experience comes and goes, without being turned into a thought or belief or even memory. Everything is free. This is living in free fall. Nothing sticks, nothing is turned into a story or belief, because there is no person left to do this. Everything comes and goes, and it is realized as rising and returning to an underlying oneness of all. And there is the knowing (intuition) that this was always the case and will always be. Timeless. No proof is needed, for this is trusted to be what completely always is already. It is the emptiness of life without SC, without any identification or personalization, and it the fullness of all possibilities and the kingdom of heaven, that doesn't come with signs to be perceived (experiences). When there are no concepts, no agenda, there is utter freedom. This is Neverything, Everywhen and Everywhere all wrapped into One. The fullness of emptiness and vice versa. This is the oceanic feeling that many of us have as a little child.

Can we Organize this, please?

Now, let's organize all of these insights and put them in a scheme (which, once you have the taste of it, you can supplement and complete with your own understandings, revelations and contradictions):

Nature/Oneness	mind/separation/the world
Reality (fullness of life)	virtual reality (limited)
Trust	belief
Once and for all, new every moment	repetition needed/craving/addiction
Knowing, Truth, Intuition (self-evident)	knowledge (needs proof)
Stillness, peace, love	words, thoughts, stress, conflict, war
Being and happening, surrender	doing, sense of free will and control
Joy	happiness's
Unborn mind, beginners mind	conditioned mind, "expertise"
Heart/Intuition/Self	mind/thoughts and feelings/person
No thoughts	thoughts, theories, dogma
No path	path, practice
Dao	(organized) religions, philosophies, science, schools, opinions, morals, laws
Awareness, "God" (supra personal or impersonal)	personal god, "devil"
Finding = end of seeking	seeking
Liberation (realization)	contraction
Realization/revelation (permanent Self or as moments of Satori)	experience (fleeting mind or as moments of Satori)
No suffering	suffering
"Guru/devotee"	teacher/scholar
Master	follower
The kingdom of heaven	the world of thought
Self/Unconditional Love	ego/conditioned (personal) love

So, now you know. Or do you?

It's time to turn all of this upside down again with a little parable:

God and the Devil were watching man while he discovered something beautiful in a desert. "Aha", said God to the Devil, "now that man has discovered truth you will have nothing to do". "On the contrary", the Devil replied, "I am going to help him organize it".

So, the scheme, which tried to organize the truth, still doesn't faithfully represent what reality is all about. This is what happens with words, they are dual by nature; and this is why the first lines of the Dao De Jing tells us:

"what can be told about the Dao, is not the real Dao".

In truth therefore is no separating line between signs of Nothing (left column of the scheme) and signs of Something (the right column). Every thing is a manifestation of No-thing. Every thing sings the song of its own absence. I called it Neverything* in another of my talks titled "*A Theory of Neverything*". But as soon (and as long) as a division occurs, Oneness disappears.

In the *Hsin Hsin Ming*** it is phrased like this:

"The Great Way is not difficult for those not attached to preferences.

When neither love nor hate arises, all is clear and undisguised.

Separate by the smallest amount, however,

and you are as far from it as heaven is from earth."

There is a wonderful saying about this apparent contradiction by the Hindu philosopher *Shankara (Adi Shankaracharya)*, who lived between 788 and 820 in *Kerala* (Southwest India) and was a great advocate of the philosophy of *Advaita Vedanta* (Vedic non-duality), in which he unites both columns in three (interconnected) short lines:

"The world is an illusion – Only Brahman is real – Brahman is the world"

What is meant by this: The (separate, limited, contracted) world (seen from the mind/ego) is illusory (fleeting, not permanent, not something to be trusted or identify with). Only Brahman (Oneness, the highest universal principle) is real, the source, nonduality, (the impersonal) God. This Oneness/no-thingness manifest itself in all the manifestations, all the things of the world, which, from this perspective of unity and no-mind, are without separation, and are all features of the whole.

When this is fully realized, which means when separation is gone, the division between the two columns in the scheme vanishes and everything from the right part of the scheme can and will be experienced as manifestations of the left part of the scheme. The world is a manifestation of Oneness and Oneness is the source of the world. In this layer of consciousness, everything stays

exactly the same and nothing changes, but simultaneously all is perceived from a completely different viewpoint, the perception of Oneness (which is in fact the break down of all viewpoints).

This is what happens in Liberation. Of course, liberation doesn't happen, because contraction doesn't really exist. There is only and always Oneness, which can not be contracted and hence does not allow for liberation. Only apparently so, in the story of the contracted mind. Which is an illusion.

Hope this was helpful.

Namaste

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1 February 2022

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* I found this word for the first time with Paul_Morgan_Somers, who I believe coined the beautiful phrase "everything sings the song of its own absence" as well.

** Seng-Ts'an, Third Zen Patriarch, *Hsin Hsin Ming*, Verses on the Faith-Mind translated from the Chinese by Richard B. Clarke, White Pine Press, Buffalo, New York, 2001.