

What has happened?

Liberation in Practice

Contraction is separation – loss of “wetness”

In an earlier Tale¹ I described my (illusory) story of realization². In this new Tale I write about the practical consequences of living from liberation. What is it, how does it come about, how does it present in day to day life? Three common misperceptions about liberation are mentioned and discussed as well, to further illustrate the answers to these questions. This is not a theoretical treatise on the system of nonduality³, but an account from realization itself.

Liberation as a loss of separation

No doubt, it is the personalizing mind that produces the contraction of being (in) the separate body, amongst the “otherness” of the world (and other bodies and things) around it. Liberation is the miraculous ending of this separating contraction of the mind, thus reducing the being from the grandiose entity the mind thinks it is, to more normal Devine proportions. And when the mind stops, this contraction is simply lost. Liberation is a loss of separation, not a gain of Oneness, for Oneness was always already there, as the substratum upon which the illusion of the person is projected. After liberation, there is still the body, but it is no longer perceived as a separate entity, but as a feature of the timeless Oneness in and as which it arises and always has been.

Clearly, to the mind this is unfathomable, for the mind is the contraction in the position of the body only. How does the experiencing (realization) happen in which there is the intimate (but not personal) sensation of being the body and, at the same time, being the boundless Oneness in which the body is also perceived, while there arises no conflict whatsoever between these positions that are revealed together? This is the unknowable happening after liberation. And yet, this is also the situation in each and everyone of us, only most people seem to be contracted and conditioned to the position of being (in) the body only, not aware of the underlying dimension of Oneness that is certainly also the case. This conceptual contraction is like the wave that has lost the feeling of the wetness of the Ocean⁴, although clearly this is an illusion for the wave is no doubt innately wet. With “liberation” this contraction ends with the vanishing of the (personal) mind. It is what happens when the revelation of Oneness, the wetness of the Ocean, is again perceived when the mind stops its magical trick of separation and veiling.

The predicament of the seeking mind

For the conditioned and personalizing mind however, this is the ultimate predicament. As long as it tries to understand liberation, to figure out ways to “get there”, liberation can simply not happen. It is the hopeless situation of seeking. But at the end of this seeking, there is no finding, only the cessation of seeking. Only when the mind surrenders its conditioned need for understanding and knowing and loses all hope for improvement or enlightenment, liberation might happen.

¹ Falling Awake, the non-story of realization, **J.Paul Jordaans**, [this website](#), 2022.

² For the use of nondual terms see *Experience, Belief, Trust, Intuition, Realization (Liberation): a little nondual dictionary*, **J.Paul Jordaans**, [this website](#), 2022.

³ For this one could read *Nonduality in Buddhism and beyond*, **David R.Loy**, Wisdom publications, 1988/2019.

⁴ This metaphore used by **Paul Morgan-Somers** on his [Facebook](#).

Surrendering to the unknown and unknowable miracle is no doubt in my eyes an imperative and most conducive condition to liberation. In cases that the seeking mind thinks “it is almost there”, liberation doesn’t happen because the mind is still active and hiding in this very thought of non-accomplishment. It also thinks that it can take itself along in the experience of liberation, and it wants this because it still clings to some precious identification, be it only to the illusion of its own dear existence. Only when the mind gives up all hope and sincerely and earnestly wants to vanish, if there is a strong pull to reality as it really is without the interface (interference) of the mind, liberation may happen.

The ordinary miracle

Liberation, however miraculous as it may be, is at the same time not more miraculous than ordinary life itself⁵. Aliveness, life, being, is already the ultimate miracle that is the source of liberation. Despite all the efforts of the thinking brain, science has only managed to partially describe what is going on in what we call “life” and universe, and in the core nothing has been explained at all. If it were not for the mind, which conceptualizes this in words and thoughts, bringing about an experience of “been there, done that, what’s next”, this now ordinary life would indeed be perceived as the miracle it really is. And, once trapped in this contraction, one can only regain the “wow”-feeling of aliveness when the mind stops its personalizing and conceptualizing activity. It produces (and can come from) a realization of stillness, quietness, peace, completeness, unconditional love that is innate to reality as it is. This reality is already happening to all of us always, and it is only the realization of its miracle that arises in liberation which forms the change of perspective, that is in fact the breakdown of any personalized perspective on what is happening and was always already happening.

Calling this “mystic”, “spiritual” or “supernatural” does not explain anything, on the contrary, it adds yet another layer of conceptual veiling, but certainly this is the miracle of aliveness that happens to all of us - although as said, in most of us it is not revealed to its fullest extend. If anything, this is most “natural” because it is what happens all the time to everything and everyone, but to no one in particular. The sun doesn’t shine only for one specific flower, it shines unconditionally for neverything⁶. And so it is with Oneness as well: it is for, in and beyond everyone. Only the personal experience of the mind prevents realization of this unconditionality, immediately to return when the mind has left its bastion of separation and returns to its natural state, the “unborn”, “pure” mind that we all were born with.

Four common misperceptions about the liberated character of reality

1. After liberation, I can’t think, feel and function anymore in the world

It is the logical presumption of the personalizing mind, that after liberation, the body can’t be anymore because it has lost its capacity of thinking. After all, as *Descartes* found out so clearly, it is the personalizing mind that equates thinking with being and thinks itself into being as a mirage. “*Cogito, ergo sum - I think, therefore I am*”. But this perception is only the perception of the limited mind, and it is incorrect because the mind is only a small part of what is happening in the thinking and awaring brain. It is only the personalizing aspect of the brain, which also produces a sense of past, present and future and the sense of psychological time. It categorizes all happenings into dualistic knowledge about when, where, why and how these happened *to the person*. When

⁵ For more about this, see the very Tale that Oneness is reading right now through your eyes and brain.

⁶ A term I think is from **Paul Morgan-Somers**. I also used it in my Tale “*A theory of neverything*”, 2021, on [this website](#).

thoughts about these categories are no longer entertained, the mind will stop. Nature does not waste energy, neural paths that are no longer used will recede into the source⁷. What is left is the brain with its awareness of what is, without the habits of claiming these happenings to an I.

After this is gone, brainpower is still available. With an empty or absent mind, we are not stupid. Things will of course still happen exactly as before, but there is no more reflex to say or think that it is happening "to me". So the personal dimension is gone. No more stories will be created in the brain about "what does this mean to me". This can indeed be completely so, free of the stories, just plain what is happening right now and here. So, Descartes was wrong, or he didn't follow through completely. It is just the other way around: "*Ubi non cogito, ibi sum – where I don't think (I am the person), there I am (as Oneness)*". I wrote a Tale about this some time ago.⁸ After liberation, conscious and unconscious problem-solving and awaring capacities of the brain are still available, and now to an even more full extent. Not being limited to the personal perspective anymore, the brain with all of its functions and senses can perceive outside the box more easily and combine positions that before were beyond its reach. It is like being "in the flow" continuously, without any effort whatsoever. It is perceived that the personal experience was only being a hindrance for realizing life and consciousness to the fullest, and not a necessary condition at all. The freeing up of personal thinking in the brain will produce a sense of enormous space and the feeling of timelessness to the being. And an enormous sense of unconditional love will arise. For no one, and for All. As Oneness.

There is still thinking of course which is mostly unconscious, the brain takes care of the body and regulates life, blood pressure, nerve system, immune system, digestion, reflexes, the senses, seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, equilibrium etcetera. Just as before. And part of it is still transferred into a conscious layer that produces awareness of what is. So there are feedback loops in the brain that makes the brain aware of some of its processes. Mostly they have to do with the senses, which makes it possible for us to navigate what seems to surround us. And there is also still the thinking in the form of problem solving. Not personal problems, but practical. How to put together this IKEA-kitchen, even when some essential screws are missing? How to organize the agenda for today in a practical and efficient way? Where are the bloody car keys? How to write this answer in an intelligible way? This is all experienced, but there is no separate entity experiencing it, it is experienced in oneness by itself. This un-personal awareness is most intimate, it is not cold or detached. On the contrary, it is full on. It is experiencing what is without the distorting and numbing interface of the personal mind.

This seems like a rational explanation but it is not. It is completely unknowable and unexplained miracle. These words only point to what is real, but reality can not be known or described. What can be said about the Dao, is not the real Dao. This can't be helped but needn't be helped because is no problem. Just be. This is what Hindu call sat-chit-ananda. Being-consciousness-bliss. I call it the Joy of Aliveness.

2. Enlightenment is a higher state of being

The liberated mind is not a higher state of anything. It is just another possibility of being, another perspective which is in fact the breakdown of the personal perspective. There is nothing to gain for the person by liberation, only to loose. The being that is overcome by liberation, loses the entire personal perspective and interests. Being free from personalization is however mostly a pleasant and

⁷ **Gary Weber** presented a theory about this between 2010 and 2019, in which he combined current cognitive neuroscience, modern physics, meditation and yoga as well as other practices into a simple, empirical approach to nondual awakening. To be seen on his [YouTube](#) channel and his [website](#).

⁸ *Ubi non cogito, ibi sum; some intuitions on the nature of awareness*; **J.Paul Jordaans**, [this website](#), 2018.

very intimate situation. In stead of only being one with the illusion of the own person, there is now the perception of being one with the reality of Oneness and life itself. At first, reality can be overwhelming, because with the loss of the personalizing function of the brain, called mind, also the personal tricks and coping mechanisms or this mind are lost. There is no more resorting to techniques like positive thinking, rationalizing away of what arises, NLP-like constructions, behavioral solutions, relativations etcetera. The character is still there however, and sometimes even more pronounced, not being hindered by thoughts of shame and conditioned limitations. And there is still preferences and habit, although they might change. Like not eating meat anymore, or less talking. But this differs from case to case and is not important. It is about Freedom from the mind, not about particularities of behaviour.

After a while though, the new way in which reality enters the being is normalized again. Without personalizing reality, also neuroses, psychoses and addictions can diminish and go, as well as tendencies to complain, compare, compete, judge and resist. That is not say that these tendencies never happen anymore, but if they do, they are perceived as Oneness playing in itself, and free from the problematic tastes it had before. This produces a much more relaxed, complying and peaceful awaring of what is, which is conducive for both body and brain. Stress reduces and emotions are no longer sticky – they come and go more quickly. They might even feel more intense, but they don't linger anymore. Nothing is contained longer than necessary to just taste it to the full, and then it goes again. It is living life lightly, not writing it in stone anymore, but in water or, even, in the air. Zen poetry is a fountain of expression of this kind of perception of reality. It produces poems like

*“The wild geese do not intend to cast their reflection
and the water has no mind to retain their image”⁹.*

In an earlier Tale¹⁰ I elaborated on ways of describing this non problematic perception of reality, with reference to the Japanese concept of *Yūgen*, which is an important concept in Japanese aesthetics, being influenced by Japanese Buddhism and Zen. It suggests: that which is beyond what can be said, but is still of this world, this experience. It points to a deep awareness of the universe, the understanding that all things are coming from or dissolving into nothingness, which is not an empty space but the space of potentiality. It can be imagined by

“watching the sun sink behind a flower clad hill. Wandering on in a huge forest without the thought of return. To stand upon the shore and gaze after a boat that disappears behind distant islands. To contemplate the flight of wild geese seen and lost among the clouds. And, subtle shadows of bamboo on bamboo.”¹¹

The sound of the rain needs no translation indeed!¹²

⁹ From the Zenrin-kushū.

¹⁰ *Everything is Wholeness – about the discovery, realization and terms of wholeness*, J.Paul Jordaans, on [this website](#), 2019.

¹¹ **Zeami Motokiyo**, as referred to in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_aesthetics. More about *Yūgen* can be found in **Andrew T. Tsubaki**: *Zeami and the Transition of the Concept of Yūgen – a note on Japanese Aesthetics*, The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol 30 nr. 1, 1971 pp. 55-67. Also there is a beautiful lecture by **Alan Watts** about terms of Japanese Aesthetics, titled “*Un-carved Block*” in the series Eastern & Western Zen.

¹² This Zen saying that captures the essence of this Tale I first heard **Alan Watts** using in this talk: *The world as Just So*, series Eastern & Western Zen; probably quoting Zen *roshi* **Morimoto**.

3. I do understand liberation, but I don't have the realization yet. I just need more time, practice and contemplation¹³

There is no path to liberation. It can happen in many ways. Debbie and I have studied and witnessed¹⁴ many stories about liberation, and there is no common path. For every person this is different, so different that indeed the thought of a path seems at least very unlikely. Sometimes it is the mind that is collapsing under the weight of it's own suffering. Sometimes the oceanic feeling we all have in our early youth, never left us completely but it lingered on, and suddenly it pulled us into oneness again. In other cases, prolonged and intensive meditation, seclusion, non-thinking were practiced before the mind gave away. Liberation also can happen seemingly spontaneous, like the falling of an apple – but of course, the apple has taken time to ripen before that. It is also possible that liberation happens as a gradual process in time, that start with a seed that grows into complete realization; this can take years or decennia, it can go completely linear or with steps at a time. In other cases, some life crisis can induce liberation, like a near death experience or another crisis that destroys a large part of the identifications on which the structure of the mind relied. Anything goes. The common factor only seems to be that at a certain moment, the activity of the mind stops or goes below a certain level, where it is no longer perceived, like the retina experiences total darkness if hit by fewer than a certain amount of photons per second. What went on before that seems to be completely unrelated in causal terms. Or, to say it differently, it is the cosmic causality where everything that happened before contributes in an unknowable way to liberation¹⁵. All these circumstances and happenings are in a way doors to liberation, and every time one can use these to give a knock on the door and see what happens. In the end, when the door opens, it is perceived that all the time one was already on the inside and no distance has been covered.

There are many philosophies however, Buddhism is the most clear example of this, where a certain path to reach enlightenment is described. This of course is food for the mind, and as long as the practice is followed, the mind is eating and existing – which prevents liberation from happening. This practice and the notion of following some path is exactly what is standing between the person and oneness, is only this thought about a path and time. Not time or practice itself. Time does not exist outside the mind, and there is no path to where you are already. When in Paris, you can't take the bus to Paris. Oneness is all there is. If you take that seriously, you will realize that you are it, immediately, here and now. If we look careful at those thoughts and be honest, we will see a mind that is afraid of losing itself. Behind these thoughts and fears, the mind is hiding because it is clinging to its illusory existence and feeding the person the notion of time and path. We should not allow it to do that, and ignore those thoughts, they are not our friend, they are keeping us from being free. No one is free "one day". Freedom is now or never. When it comes, it will be now. Why wait for a later Now? The mind is feeding the person these thoughts: "I almost understand but I am just not there yet, almost. Let me just do some more searching, some more contemplation, some more listening, pondering. I don't have the realization yet, but in time it will come, if grace lets me".

¹³ A most clear video about this by Fred Davis can be seen [here](#). It is called "the 180 degree paradox". And, specific to this particular conviction, [here](#).

¹⁴ We have for instance listened to **David Godman** (on his [YouTube](#) channel), or read his books about Indian sages like Ramana Maharshi, Nisargadatta Maharaj, H.W.L. Poonja, Lakshmana Swami and many others. For more recent accounts, some have been collected by **Iain and Renate McNay** who started <http://conscious.tv> in 2008 and done over 400 interviews since with seekers from all over the world, some of which clearly show a living experience of wholeness.

¹⁵ For an account of the way cosmic causality seems to have worked out in my own realizing, see *Falling Awake, the non-story of realization*, **J.Paul Jordaans**, this website, 2022

In truth, it is just opposite to that. You DO have the realization (everyone does, because only oneness is), but you don't understand. That is perfectly alright because Oneness is not for the mind to understand. It is unknowable and miraculous. It is aliveness, no one understands this. So we need not wait for understanding to happen, it will never come. It is just a matter of not believing these thoughts about needing to understand or about not yet understanding. If we identify and lose the attachments there still are for the separation it becomes clear that the realization has already happened. It is what we experience right here now, only without the mind and separation It is very ordinary and incredibly miraculous at the same time. Not to the mind though, not to any one. Only in Oneness.

4. Liberation takes care of all problems of life

Yes and no. What was happening before liberation, will still be obviously happening after. Liberation is a miracle, but there is no magic. So there is still pain, tax-paying, working and creativeness – liberation is no cure for anything. But the perception of what is happening is no longer personal or problematic anymore, just matter-of-factly. Take my case for instance. My body still has *cystic fibrosis* and my lungs only work for thirty percent, when climbing stairs I still have to stop every ten steps and still need bucketloads of medication. But no problems arise, just what is. Stillness and complying happens. The disease is still there, but not the personal sense and idea of disease. It is just what is. Miraculously and wonderfully. Everything still happens, without agenda, completely free and without suffering. Hunger, disease, discomfort happens, but not to anyone personal. The body will take care of it in a natural way. When hungry, eat. When thirsty, drink. When tired, sleep. When in pain, endure. When threatened, defend or shield or leave. It is all Love. There is no separate I needed to interfere, this will only cause problems and duration. Reactions will happen spontaneously. Without I, there is no trouble, only what's happening, completely free and natural. No suffering, no stories. *Jiddu Krishnamurti* said: "My secret is, that I don't mind what happens". Indeed. And it is an open secret. *Tony Parsons*¹⁶ wrote a good book about that. And of course there is the ultimate wisdom of *Ramana Maharshi*¹⁷: "Best be quiet".

Another overwhelming misperception to conclude with

There seems to be the widely spread notion, that human kind has lost paradise. That after The Big Bang, or the events in the garden of Eden, everything is falling apart with ever increasing speed. Both notions are delusive. What is right here now, is paradise happening. The mind cannot perceive it, but beyond the mind it is *luce clarius*. We have not gone anywhere and need not seek anything. A Big Bang might indeed be true, but there is no "after". Reality is timeless and the Big Bang is not behind us. *BigBanging* is happening continuously as we speak and read. We are it. Nothing is ever lost, the universe has no back door. The Law of preservation of All prevents this from happening. The paradise was only lost in the story and perception of the mind, and when this projection stops, paradise magically reappears. This is liberation.

¹⁶ *The Open Secret*, **Tony Parsons**, <https://www.theopensecret.com>. The book is for free download in pdf.

¹⁷ **David Godman** wrote many books about the life and teachings of **Ramana Maharshi**, that are a good place to start with and find out more. <https://www.davidgodman.org>.

In the words of William Blake, the 18th century English poet and engraver:

“The whole creation will be consumed and appear infinite and holy, whereas it now appears finite and corrupt. This will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment. But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul is to be expunged (...). If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro’ narrow chinks of his cavern.”¹⁸

It seems appropriate to end this Tale by quoting the advise that *Ramana Maharshi* gave to one of his most devoted members of his ashram, *Annamalai Swami*: “If you want moksha¹⁹ write, read and practice the instructions in *Ellam Ondre*”²⁰. Better advise no person can obtain. A few years ago we followed it and copied the entire text with a fountain pen in our best handwriting. A chapter every day. It was a week well spent. Did it bring about *moksha*? Well, in our case *moksha* already was present, but the writing in itself was a most peaceful endeavor indeed.

J.Paul Jordaans, Grathem, 23 March 2022

More Tales? look [here](#)

Grateful? Look [here](#)

¹⁸ **William Blake**, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1792).

¹⁹ Freedom from the wheel of life, freedom from the known, liberation.

²⁰ See **Tom Das**, *Liberation and nonduality*. “On another occasion when I asked Bhagavan (Sri Ramana Maharshi) to select some reading material for me, he gave me a short-list of six books: *Kaivalya_Navaneetam*, *Ribhu Gita*, *Ashtavakra Gita*, *Ellam Ondre*, *Swarupa Saram* and *Yoga Vasishtam*. He laid particular stress on *Ellam Ondre*, telling me: “If you want moksha write, read and practise the instructions in *Ellam Ondre*”.” (**Annamalai Swami**, *Living by the Words of Bhagavan*). A pdf version of *Ellam Ondre* can be found [here](#).