

# *How to Be*

*about getting out of your mind*

This page should be completely empty to give a true representation of the subject of this paper. But then it would not be very informative. And it has to be, because otherwise you would not be interested. You see, that's your trouble in a nutshell. You want to be informed, you want to be interested and interesting. That is, your mind wants to.

Now, these words are not going to explain what it is to Be. No words ever could. Because words are abstract representations of reality and therefore can never be It. But some well-chosen words can at least point at Being or how to discover it. To point at reality. They are synonyms. Other synonyms of Being are the Self, God, Now, Nature, Dao, Un-knowing, Presence, That-what-is-and-isn't. And there are many more, depending on the cultural background and the language of those who came up with these words.

To point at what it is to Be, one can only describe what not to be, what not to do. And refraining from all of that will discover, disclose what it is to Be. It is what is left uncovered when all the covering-activity has ceased. So, what is this covering-activity all about? What are we covering, who is doing it and why? The why is simple: we learned to do it. We are taught to. Our culture demands it. Common knowledge thinks that people have to be taught to be a certain way, a some-one, instead of just Be. Who is doing it? We all are. We are doing it to ourselves and to each other. What are we covering up? That what is happening naturally without anyone owning it.

## Conditioning and separation

So we come into the world (actually, we come out of this world, nature produced us, we are not aliens) in a natural state and then the conditioning starts. Some of it is relatively harmless and practical. We learn how to hold our poo, and while this is a pain in the ass, there are advantages to it. But other conditioning is not so harmless, because it changes who we are into something more and more abstract and unreal. So we learn that we are of a certain gender, a certain nationality, have a certain religion or ethnicity and foremost, we learn that we are the body, that we are somebody, that there are other somebodies (mother is often the first of these to identify) and that there is a world of stuff around us, and that We Are Not That.

We are separate, that's what we are told. There is I and You and Other. All these teachings are completely at odds with the universe, where everything is connected and nothing is separate<sup>1</sup>, all is one, but our way of life defies nature and teaches separation nonetheless. All these separations are stored in our brain and they grow and grow. They turn into a separate identity, an ego, a set of concepts that we use to describe how we are separate and what we are attached to, and we get attached even to that. We think it describes who we are. And we use it to describe the world and universe around us. But in fact, it only describes our conditioning.

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<sup>1</sup> See for an exploration of this notion J.Paul Jordaans, *Everything is Wholeness*, on this website.

## The mind

This we could call the working of the mind. A function of our brain that holds a certain image of who we think we are and what the world is about. It puts our self as a separate being in the center of the world around us. It is all abstract and taught knowledge that has no real connection with nature and reality as it is, but we believe it and defend it for social, political and economic reasons and out of habit, and we think we are completely the same as that. We don't know better anymore. It forces us to create stories about everything that is happening (connecting the dots), with us as the main character (it is happening to Me), in a certain order (which creates the illusion of time – we use and develop our memory for this) at a certain place (which contributes to the shattering of wholeness). Our belief that we are (in) this body instead of just Are, for a certain time between birth and death of this form instead of Timeless, fits in this and is a direct result of it. When asked who you are, you mostly describe what you do, who your relations are, what age you are etcetera, so mostly you sum up your attachments to the outer world by which you feel defined. You don't tell about wholeness, because you forgot about this. It got covered up completely. But there is a longing for it, for that what once was a reality.

## There must be more than this

Now there comes a time in the life of this conditioned entity when the absolute belief in this identification with the mind becomes at least doubtful or very problematic. It can be triggered by a personal crisis, by pure curiosity, by a certain experience of wholeness as a glimpse, by a diffuse feeling “that this cannot be all there is”, which is a shadow of the longing for wholeness. We can push it away with an addiction (work, alcohol, drugs, sex, games, news) or take pills to fight the depression or desperation that relates to it. Or we can start searching for the missing part. Some do this from early in life, some start when they are in the last phase. We want to shift back from doing and identifying to being and letting go. From separation to wholeness. From culture to nature. This is a good thing. It is not easy, because we have two adversaries: our own conditioned mind and our social structure. The latter can be overcome more easily, at least in a relatively free society, although we can find out that we change so much that our old social structure does not fit any longer. Friends disappear, perhaps we quit our jobs. But those are only practical difficulties that can be overcome.

Our own mind is more difficult. We have a strange task at hand. We have to find out something that is not ruled by the mind, but at first, we have only the mind to do this job with. And the mind is not made for this, it is used to do quite the opposite. It wants to understand, categorize, attach, identify, separate and judge. And it wants to bring effort and time into the process. And exactly all of these things are what separates us from our goal, what covers up that which we want to discover: the pure this-here-now. So we try to search for wholeness with the very instrument that destroyed wholeness in the first place, our separated and separating mind.

## The quest of the mind to destroy the mind

So the quest of the mind is not our quest, not what we should identify with. Quite the opposite, our job is to do without the mind, to intuit instead of understand, to let go instead of attach, to observe



instead of identify, to join instead of separate, to welcome instead of judge. The seeking mind is not our friend, but an obstacle. We will never be able to uncover how to Be, when we use the mind or try to bring it along on our quest. Mind is just a model of reality, a poor model. The famous painting of Magritte of a pipe, subtitled: "ceçi n`est pas une pipe" (this is not a pipe) is the exact representation of this problem. The mind's model of reality has as little to do with reality as Magritte's painting with a real pipe. It is abstract and almost completely dead. You could not light and smoke Magritte's pipe any more than

you can quench your thirst with the word water or feel alive in the mind's abstract, unnatural and deadened version of reality. And the mind, with its poorly modelled version of reality and sense of separation, is just what got us into all the trouble that we want to get rid of, so the first thing to get rid of, is the mind itself.

All experiences are defined by their opposites. To know black, you have to know white. Good and bad. Up and down. So, to get out of the mind, first you have to get in the mind. Now, this is a different situation from that in which most people are. Most people are *of* the mind. In other words: they belong to the mind. They are convinced that they are totally defined by the sum-total of the thoughts, feelings, sensations and images that go on in the mind. They are fully identified with the mind. One has to break (or see through) this identification first and slowly move to a position where the mind is still active, but one is no longer of the mind and can observe it. In that way, one can start being in the mind and knowing to be separate of it anyway. All the ways of doing this can be described as spiritual practice. One learns to observe the mind and detects that in between thoughts etcetera there are little gaps of space, of stillness. We can do yoga, meditation, mindfulness, self-inquiry, love-surrender-devotion or more extreme things like the Buddha did. It will teach us how to observe the mind, how to see its functioning without engaging with it. This is very important, but it will also teach us that there are no ways of "getting to" reality, there is no path. You can't get to Rome if you are already there without knowing. Reality is nothing other than our innermost being. It's right here. So, the practices alone will perhaps show us the edge of the sea, but they will not get us wet. They will not bring us "in Being". The only thing that will, is when we finally let go of the mind, accomplish not to use the mind any longer as a model of reality. Any belief in the mind as a system that has anything to do with reality and Being, should be abandoned. The mind is not about Being. It is about doing, conceptualizing, about constructing a model of reality that can be practical at most to function in the world. But it is only that, a model, a map, it's not the world, it's not the road. We cannot Be, and believe in the model at the same time. It is one or the other: to Be reality, or to get lost in a poor representation of it that our mind provides. We have to find reality by adapting a different perspective: It is not about me. Nothing is about me. For this and as a result of this, the illusion of the mind and the separate person will and must vanish. Separateness is not a thing that can be replaced by another thing called "enlightenment". It is a process that has to stop.

Where does it end?

So in the end this quest, the seeking, shows us the illusion of the edge of the sea. If we want to get all wet and real, we have to jump in. At first, with a residual mind, we will put in one foot and this foot becomes the sea. But the other foot is still dry (mind) and it wants to know how it feels, but there is no understanding for it in this foot because it still only knows dry, and the other foot is not feeling, it is gone and turned into water. As long as the mind wants only to try out Being, have an experience, to know Being, perhaps to come along as the mind, it will not work. The other foot can't step in the sea without getting wet and disappear, and it cannot stay dry on the shore and get a taste of wet for free either. Likewise the mind can't know Being, it can only let go of itself and dissolve in Being, thereby vanishing completely as mind. The ego has to collapse, to give up in order to Be.

This might take some time of stepping in and out of the sea with one foot, but eventually, if we persist and really want to Be rather than put up with an untrue version of reality, the pull of the sea becomes stronger than the resistance of the dry foot - stronger than the residual attachment to dryness, and finally it just takes one more step to find out that we have been the sea all the time and the whole mind-ego structure, the whole experience of stepping in and out of the sea with one foot, was just an illusion of the mind to bring us to Being. There was no seeking, no path to the sea, no ego-mind, there always was and will be only This. Being. That what happens. You can't be anything else but this. There is nothing outside or other than this.

To recapitulate – spiritual practice

So, how to get out of your mind and Be? First, you have to recognize the difference between the mind and you. You have to learn to see the mind as something artificial, unnatural, limited, as only a model of reality instead of thinking that it is you and it is how reality looks like. You have to see that this mind-made sense of "I" and the separation is a complete illusion. Sometimes this recognition is so strong and overwhelming that it puts a person into Being and out of the mind, into reality at once. There are accounts of this, of people getting (so called) enlightened on the spot. But mostly, even in these cases if you look into it, there is a certain history to it, some preparation had been going on. So, for mostly all of us, there is quite some work to do and it takes time. Some, or extensive, re-programming, depending on how strong the mind is and how pure and strong the longing for reality. It should not be a longing for different or better experiences (like a longing for more peace and happiness, or more spirituality, or for enlightenment or any other concept), it should be a moving to less complexity, less thinking, a thinning of the crust of the mind-made illusions. A turning away from the mind and its influence.

Spiritual practice is useful for that, no matter what technique we use. Learning to distinguish and use the gaps in the mind. Learning to ignore the mind and Be anyway. Learning to let go of the illusion of control, the illusion of separateness, disposing of conditioning. Questioning the model of the mind. Less talking, less thinking, less imagining. More stillness and contentment. Choices in lifestyle. Certain parts of the brain (involved with "I, me, my", doing, controlling and time/past/future) are getting less active. Other parts (involved with quiet attention in the present) take over. The grip of the mind diminishes. The illusion thins out. You live your life more from intuition than from thinking. You learn that life takes care of itself in a better way without your interference, than with. You perform your daily duties with an ever diminishing sense of "doing", things just get done somehow. The sense of "you" diminishes, just as a feeling for time.

## Leap of faith into Love

Then, finally, and for most people this will be after years rather than much sooner, there can be a leap of faith. Or call it an act of grace. It cannot be forced. It doesn't take time. There is nothing you can do to make it happen, it is not a doing. The end of seeking is not a finding, it is just the end of seeking, which also ends the seeker and with him, the illusion of separateness. So, don't get excited about it. It will never happen to "you". You (that is: the old separate you) will not be there to enjoy it. There is nothing to be found, because there is only this what already is. It is like running in the desert towards a pool of water, jumping in and realizing that not only the pool, but also you were a fata morgana and then there is just the sand that always was. What could be needed for this to be what it already is? There is nothing happening, only a cessation of happening, the seeking stops. Suddenly it dawns. It is realizing that all there is, is what is happening, and nothing is about you. The mind is no longer in charge. The sense of "I" might disappear completely. That is, what disappears is the feeling of separateness. The "I" that is left, is presenting itself as a feature of wholeness. It cannot be understood. It is un-knowing. If asked who you are, there are no words. What happens is, you start smiling (which is a good sign of being). It actually is nothing special, it is quite natural. If you are really there, there is only This. It is the absence of the veil of mind, the sense of a separate I, which stood between you and reality. It might resemble the subtle sensation of being in a room when suddenly the hum of the air conditioning that you had not noticed consciously before, stops and there is some relief in the silence that follows. Only in case of the mind stopping, the hum of the air conditioning was never there but only in your imagination, so what stopped was not the hum, but your imagination of it. The idea of a separate I that is running the show seems absolutely ridiculous, untrue and arrogant, and there is the realization that this was never the case.

In the words of the famous Sufi-poet Rumi<sup>2</sup>:

*"The minute I heard my first love story, I started looking for you,  
not knowing how blind that was.  
Lovers do not finally meet somewhere,  
they're in each other all along".*

Reality is what remains and always was. It carries on as the appearances that always were, but now there is nobody there to give any meaning to it, nobody to judge, nobody that tries to know, understand, own, change, improve or control or make a story out of that what appears. Everything just appears, is happening, every moment is new and unique, there is no one to make a story out of these moments or putting them in a sequential order, creating some timeline. Every moment is perfect. Not perfect as a judgement, but as in totally complete, exactly what it is, not different from what it is. The concepts of past, now and future lose their mental meaning. The thinking brain quietly assists as always by running the body and solving practical problems, even better than when the mind was still interfering. What is left is Joy, freedom and simplicity. And no one to know it.

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<sup>2</sup> Mohamed (D)Jalal ad-Din Balkhi *Rumi*, Balch, 30 September 1207 – Konya, 17 december 1273.

Grathem, 24 October 2019

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