

*Embark on a Journey to your
Highest Self...*

Back to

Incomplete

Grant Andrews

Copyright © 2011 by Grant Andrews.

All rights reserved under the Pan-American and International Copyright Conventions. This book is available for sale through the official website. If you have purchased it through another source, please report this with an email to the address below.

Back to Incomplete

Published 2011: Cape Town, South Africa

www.backtoincomplete.blogspot.com

Contact:

backtoincomplete@gmail.com

Facebook: Back to Incomplete

Twitter: back2incomplete

Contents

Introduction	4
---------------------	---

Part One Self-Knowledge

i	Awakening	9
ii	Your Nature	15
iii	Passion-Being	22
iv	Bodyplace	27
v	Home	33
vi	Time	39
vii	Mindplace	45
viii	Openness and Readiness	51
ix	Emotionplace	58
x	Happiness	62
xi	Fear	69
xii	Soulplace	75
xiii	Responsibility and Commitment	84

Recap of Part One	92
--------------------------	----

Part Two The World

i	Treading Lightly	99
ii	Service	105
iii	Work	110

iv	Money	115
v	Possession and Attachment	122
vi	Growing Up and Getting Stuck	129
vii	When Reality Shatters Ideals	135
viii	Anger	140
ix	Love, Part I: Behind The Feelings	146
x	Love, Part II: Connection and Meaning	153
xi	Sex	160
xii	Finding Joy	168
Recap of Part Two		173

Part Three

The Meaning of Life

i	Untangling Meaning and Making Life Meaningful	180
ii	Here, Now	186
iii	Goals, Dreams and a State of Ambition	190
iv	Courage	197
v	Oneness with God	203
vi	Grace	210
vii	Power	215
viii	Experience	220
ix	Expression	226
x	The Mysteries of Life	231
xi	The Way Forward	235
Recap of Part Three		240
Back to Incomplete		244
About the Author		247

Introduction

Back to Incomplete started as a blog in early 2010, a space where I could vent my uncertainties about life. I needed to reach my own understandings about spiritual ideas, and the blog offered me a safe space where I could reason through challenging concepts and principles.

I began to notice that working through each concept, while difficult and often draining, seemed to offer me many rewards. I was able to notice the challenges of each concept as they presented in my life, and deal with them in a conscious way. I was able to form connections between all of the spiritual and philosophical crumbs which I had picked up over years of reading and reflection. And I was able to have spiritual dialogue with people in meaningful ways, and share in the journeys of others through mutual exchange of ideas and resources. It occurred to me that *Back to Incomplete* had become a major part of my passion-being and a way for me to grow my own spirituality, and out of that understanding I decided to write this book.

The ideas I share here are reworkings of many pieces of writing I have done over the last few years. Some of them are direct reactions to books which I have read or speakers I have listened to, where I try to make the philosophies functional in my life if I find them useful: Courage, Happiness, and Service are examples of these. Other pieces are based on ideas which have helped me work through difficult situations and maintain a sense of clarity as I approach them, such as the chapter on When Reality Shatters

Ideals and the discussions on Love in Part Two. The chapters range from the philosophical, the situational and optimistic, to the deeply challenging pieces where questions are raised without reaching any final conclusion. This is the nature of spiritual exploration: very often you just do not know. Sometimes the not-knowing can be frustrating, but I try to maintain a sense of inquisitiveness and exploration in this book which confronts uncertainty with a smile.

At its heart this is not an advice book or a self-help book, although both of these things might happen at various points throughout, and many of those types of books were consulted in the writing. I see it as a book of exploration, a way to deepen the understandings which you have already formed, and a way to confront and refocus the understandings which you might feel have been established. I see it as a way to start asking the big questions again and to reach towards answers for yourself: What is the meaning of life? What is a good life? What is love? Where are we going?

The book deals with spiritual questions which we have all encountered before: the state of being present in your life and living in the here and now, having a meaningful contribution to the world, having a connection with god or spirit, living in happiness and joy, and living with grace. All of these topics are handled in a way which requires further self-reflection, instead of providing finality.

So this book might be useful at any level of your spiritual journey. If you are committed to a certain way of thinking and seeing the world, this book might help you to explore new aspects of your philosophy and apply it to specific aspects of your life. Additionally, this book could be useful if you have not thought much about spirituality at all, as it provides a broad discussion on many topics related to spiritual exploration.

Back to Incomplete is divided into three parts. Part One deals with Self-Knowledge, and discusses the various aspects of your being: the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. This section asks questions about your true

nature, and how your ideas and illusions about yourself impact on that deeper truth. It aims to improve self-understanding through introspection, with a focus on the personal and the immediate surroundings.

Part Two extends the discussion to your relationship with external factors in The World, and speaks about things like relationships, money, work and service. This section is more concerned with action, and the way you respond to your surroundings. It works to reconcile personal ideals with sometimes harsh realities, and gives divergent perspectives on your relationships with people and things in the world.

Part Three looks to the spiritual and universal dimension, with discussions of concepts like presence, godliness, purpose, and the meaning of life. The individual and the collective are brought together through concepts like power and spiritwork.

Each chapter ends with a meditation on its contents, so that you can relate it to your own life by engaging closely with the material. The meditations typically encompass a set of questions which you can work through at your own pace, as well as a list of concepts discussed in that chapter which you can reflect on. These meditations could help to enrich your experience of this book.

Each chapter is meant to build on the chapter before it. The sections typically progress so that all of the concepts can be linked. So, certain chapters, particularly those in Part III, will make very little sense unless you have read the previous two Parts. However, it could often be more useful to read a chapter out of sequence when it becomes relevant to you, to aid your own reflection on whichever situation you are currently faced with.

My goal for this book is that it becomes a tool for empowerment. I hope that some of the ideas will resonate with you and that it will be, in some small way, a propeller towards your evolution and a contribution to your spiritwork. I hope that it helps you to experience and express yourself on higher levels.

I recommend keeping a journal while you read *Back to Incomplete*, so that you can work through the various meditations offered here and have a record of your reflections. I also find the slow process of writing to be a great way to digest your thoughts, so you could also use the journal to reflect on the chapter you have read in your own way.



Part One

Self-Knowledge

Awakening

There are times when I feel completely numb.

I am plagued by the challenging questions in life: What do I really want? Why do I never get what I think I want? Why do I feel incapable of handling life? Why do I constantly feel overwhelmed, tired or dissatisfied with life? And why do I have this unceasing anger?

Usually, introspection only comes after a long period of anger. I can let the reins go completely for months, and fall into long stretches of stagnation, resentment, and violent thoughts. I promise myself that I will try to figure out why things are going wrong, and that I will try to reach back to joy, fulfilment and understanding at some point in the future.

But when will awakening begin? Will I finally start this process when I feel better? Or when I have the time?

Being conscious of myself is a necessary step in order to reach godliness. Yet I delay this necessary step, because I imagine that it is something hard to do, and that I need to somehow be better prepared for it.

Awakening is looking at where I currently am in life. It is not looking to the future or to the past. I am not waiting for something to arrive which will

finally allow me to find godliness, and I am not longing for the understanding or peace which I once had. When I look to the past or the future for my self-definition, I begin to forget and devalue who I am right here and now. By taking my thoughts and actions to another time and place, I am moving away from who I am. Coming back to myself, and looking at myself deeply, is reaching for awakening.

Awakening is the slow process of introspection which is never finished, but which is always evolving and leading to new levels. When I become stuck in results, and become focused on reaching a sense of finality in life, I am automatically saying that where I am right now is not good enough. Even if my current position is not ideal in my perception, awakening is looking at myself, and understanding my relationship with the world and with God, in every moment.

When you reach for awakening, you automatically achieve a sense of enlightenment. Enlightenment is the awareness and consciousness of your deepest truth. It is your way of bringing your deepest truth into the light of consciousness, and illuminating every aspect of your being. Enlightenment is also the lifting of emotional weights, an act which leaves you spiritually lighter. You move away from your resentments of your current position, and you confront your illusions about yourself in a way that allows you a lightness of spirit.

Your emotional baggage is found in all of your desperate attempts to escape the person that you are right here and now, and how you try to hide that person from everyone else. You might pretend to be someone you are not, or keep certain parts of yourself locked away from the world. But these actions come from a place of resentment and disappointment for the person that you are in this moment. This only serves to reinforce your emotional baggage, since you look at yourself through a lens of avoidance and fear. You act out of the fear that you are not worthy of light and love, and that you

need to be someone else in order to qualify for the approval of others, of God, and of yourself.

When you subscribe to these thoughts, you are living outside of yourself. You are trying to move as far away from your reality as you can. Living outside of yourself could involve always doing the things that you think will garner you the most praise or acceptance, or simply resigning to the fears and insecurities which you hold.

On the other hand, when you move into awakening, you are appreciating and loving every aspect of your being. You begin to be conscious and aware of your reliance on the illusions you hold about yourself, and you begin to notice how you are living outside of yourself. You accept your own humanity, and aim to move into godliness.

Awakening is strengthening your connection to your deepest self and God. It is remembering your purpose in life. It is reaching higher levels of openness and readiness. It is a way of tapping into your power, and of not fearing your own powerlessness. It is confronting everything that defines you in this moment.

Obviously this is a daunting place to go to. It is frightening to stay with yourself even when you are not exactly the person you have always wanted to be. It is frightening to abandon the ideals of the past or the future, and to stay with who you are right now. It is extremely frightening to experience the fear and insecurity which you might hold, and to face the danger of opening up parts of yourself that might have never been exposed before. No wonder many people are afraid of awakening, and no wonder almost all of us go through long stretches where we avoid introspection completely.

It becomes even more frightening when you have been living outside of yourself for a long time. Living outside of yourself is a long-term strategy of avoiding certain aspects of yourself, and carrying emotional baggage without making any attempt at awareness. This could entail doing a job that offers you no joy, resenting the fact that you do not have the money to afford the

things you want, being angry that you can never attract your ideal partner, or being frustrated that you still have not overcome a certain obstacle in your life.

Mostly, living outside of yourself entails a future- or past-oriented perception. This entails that you either long for something which you once had and lost, or you fixate on wanting something which you do not have. When you have been living in this state for a long time, you might fall into numbness. You wait for things to get better without looking deeply at why things are the way that they are. But, you are unable to transcend the situations which you do not acknowledge and confront. The longer you live outside of yourself, the more you allow this numbness to define who you are.

Living outside of yourself is tempting when you define your entire being by your current circumstances. You think that ‘financially unstable’, ‘unhappy’ or ‘single’ define who you are. When you see these non-ideal aspects as defining your life, you become comforted by the illusions of living outside of yourself. You search for a way to mask your current disappointments in life, and rather focus on a picture of yourself, in the past or in the future, where you are already complete and happy.

This future- or past-oriented perception causes you to avoid being with yourself as you are in the moment. Your connection to godliness can only exist in a state of awakening. Your spiritwork can only be done in a state of awakening. So how do you reach for awakening when living outside of yourself has become your comfort-zone?

The first step is simply to remind yourself. Remember that awakening is where you want to be. This can be done in a number of very simple ways. You could say out loud: ‘I choose to live in awakening’, and become conscious of your current situation. Pay attention to what you are thinking, feeling, and doing, and focus your energy on looking at yourself. The main aim here is to be conscious again. Develop a personal reminder to bring yourself back to awakening. This could be an item that you carry with you,

or something that you recite. It can be anything that reminds you to be conscious and to move back into awakening.

This first step is useful whenever you see yourself drifting back into living outside of yourself. You can reach back to awakening when you become overwhelmed by a situation, or when you see yourself creating an illusion to hide your truth from the world. Have something that reminds you that you are bigger than your current situation, and that you have a connection with God.

Once you have returned to consciousness, you can truly participate in a moment, instead of merely living through it. You can start to make your surroundings a reflection of your spirit. The only effective change comes from the inside out, and comes from conscious and focused action. So when you are in a state of awakening, you can bring about higher levels of godliness in your life and in the lives of others.

When you lead a conscious and authentic life, you can truly get what you want out of it. When you are living outside of yourself, you only know what your ingrained insecurities or resentments want in order to feed themselves. Your desires become clouded by your emotional baggage, and your actions in pursuit of these desires begin to feed your emotional baggage.

Awakening means that you choose to be with yourself as you are now, and to look at what is behind the illusions you hold. You reach for enlightenment, and open the pathways to spiritual evolution. Listening to who you are in the present moment is a way of valuing your own humanity, and learning to love yourself on higher levels.

Meditation

This meditation will aim to help you move towards awakening in your own life.

Firstly, develop a reminder to bring yourself to awakening. Make it something personal which resonates with you, and something short and easy to remember so that you can use it whenever you need to. Your reminder could also be a physical object which you carry around with you, or simply the process of taking deep breaths and being grateful for your blessings. Find something that works for you. You could also do more research about what other people do to remind themselves to reach for awakening, and try some of these until you find a perfect fit. Armbands, birthstones, family pictures, poetry and short recitations are some examples.

Next, take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal. These questions might help to remind you what you are reaching towards, and where awakening can take you. They are questions about your truest self as you see it at this point.

- × Who am I at my core?
- × What do I really want out of life?
- × How do I define my spiritwork?
- × What kind of impact do I want to have in life?

Ideas to reflect on: Awakening; Enlightenment; Living outside of yourself; Future- and past-oriented perception; Disconnection; Participating in a moment.



Your Nature

Getting clarity on yourself and your understandings,
and translating it into action

The quest of introspection could lead you towards higher levels of godliness in your life. Often, we have reservations about how useful this quest is, and we wonder whether getting to know ourselves better will really lead us to higher levels of being. But this journey into every aspect of our being can lead us to make conscious choices in life, and to open ourselves to godliness in higher ways.

Each of us is not only an individual, but also a social presence. We are all living as examples to each other, and while the responsibility of our existence and its impact ultimately falls on the one doing the living, we also have a sense of responsibility to each other. That social responsibility falls not only in our actions to better the situations of others, but also in our way of being, our method of engaging, and our level of development and understanding. This is a more intimate interpretation of the ‘charity begins at

home' adage. Social responsibility begins with self-development and self-understanding. It begins with knowing what you are getting out of particular situations, why you enter into them, what toxicity your ingrained-self could lead to, and what joys your passion-being can bring to those around you. Self-knowing cannot come before your social presence, but it could feed into a more effective social presence. So this quest of self-discovery is absolutely an unselfish quest, and a socially responsible quest. When you can bring your highest self to a situation, you can uplift others more effectively.

It could, however, fall into selfishness. Self-knowledge which is not translated into action and engagement might solely be ego-driven, and might have little lasting impact. When the guru sits on the mountain and gets to know himself perfectly without going down to the village and engaging in an empowering way, he is purely serving himself. Self-knowledge needs to feed your own growth and the growth of others. It needs to be an open door, an invitation, instead of simply a self-serving process.

So how does one reach for self-knowledge? Knowing yourself on the most basic level is unearthing your ingrained-self, which comprises those parts of yourself that will probably be with you for life. Self-knowledge is finding ways to understand every part of your being. It is also the act of clarifying concepts in useful ways within your own experience, and then seeing how you can use those new understandings in practice.

Whenever you take action, you are acting out of an underlying driver. This means that your actions will be the results of something deeper. And when you understand the driver that you are acting out of, you can redirect your actions or reinforce them, depending on whether the underlying driver is in line with your highest truth, or in line with other factors such as ingrained fears or insecurities. You are always acting out of something deeper, even when you think your actions are thoughtless and spontaneous, or brought on by external factors like peer-pressure. Your actions are always a symptom of your ingrained-self. When you know what you are, what you

want out of life, which parts of you are strong and which weak, and what your dreams and hopes are, your actions can have direction and you can ground them in your passion-being. But knowing who you are comes with its own complicated questions.

Is there a nature to each person, something unchangeable and stuck with that person forever? Is self-discovery merely unearthing this unchangeable nature, and then, since it cannot be changed, what is the use in knowing it if we cannot redirect our lives?

It is useful to think of these dominant parts of yourself as the ‘ingrained-self’ instead of the ‘natural’. The ingrained-self is what you will use as a filter for most interactions, and incorporates the things that you will struggle with for most of your life, and what you will love and cherish most of the time. Although it is impossible to completely define an individual, especially by these markers, the ingrained-self guides your actions, and it is thus very useful to get to know it better. These markers are necessarily socially determined, change throughout your lifetime, and present themselves more strongly around certain people. They are not part of your essence, but they are ingrained on your being in a way that makes them important to recognise and deal with, and to learn the advantages and disadvantages of in order to be effective in your life. So your ingrained-self is not you in your entirety, but it defines your cycles and approaches and fears and passions, all of those external markers, which will probably be with you forever. Getting to know these things is a big part of self-knowledge.

Mostly the ingrained parts of yourself are inherited from the people you spend most of your time with, and the strongest feelings you have when you are in their presence. When you resent something about your parent, and you allow that resentment to persist and grow, it becomes part of your ingrained-self. Once this happens you will either present similar behaviour to what you resented most, or you will grow a strong preoccupation with that trait, and probably find yourself around many more people who present it. When you

admire something in your sibling and see that trait as defining them, and you feed love, happiness and togetherness into that admiration, that trait will become ingrained into your being, and you will either present it yourself or find it presented in those around you.

You will notice the ingrained parts of your being present themselves in your interests, the types of music you listen to, the ways you interact with people, the fears and worries you carry, the relationships you enter into, and the type of social presence that you are. Sometimes you could even be doing something which others might consider good, but you do it out of some ingrained destructive thought and feeling. The action then begins to feed the feeling. You resent every step of the process, and might not even know why. Sometimes you could be doing an activity which you know is in line with your passion-being, like studying towards your dreams, or playing your instrument, or writing in your journal, and yet there are negative feelings surrounding it which you do not quite understand, and which are fed by ingrained insecurities or fears. Familiarising yourself with the markers of your ingrained-self can help you to change your approach to these actions, so that you can realise what those negative feelings are saying and infuse joy into these activities.

In this way it is clear that your ingrained-self is closely related to your habits in life. While it is not easy to change these markers, it is not impossible either. By redirecting your focus, discovering the truths of your current habits, and exploring how they relate to your underlying motivations, you can reach towards passion-being and awakening. By looking closely at the way you construct an identity around important people, activities, and ideas about yourself, you can start to untangle your underlying motives and have effective and positive action in your life.

The explorations offered below are aimed at encouraging you to reflect on your ingrained-self, so that you can take action in alignment with your passion-being. They are meant to encourage you to reach your own

understandings in life which help you to live passionately, effectively, and joyfully. They might offer a useful first step towards understanding many of your illusions about yourself, and many of the factors which may be influencing your ingrained-self.

Meditation

Below are six levels of reflection on the stories about yourself that you hold on to. Try to distinguish these from your deeper truths as you have dealt with in the previous meditation. The reflections might be challenging and might not seem to reach any sense of conclusion, but the findings will be useful for future meditations. Try not to rush it, even if you only spend a few minutes at a time on each question and it takes a few days to complete. The aim is for you to become more familiar with your ingrained-self at each of the six levels. If you find any particular question difficult to deal with, try to remind yourself that none of the levels can fully define who you are.

- × **Level 1: How do I imagine I am looked at?** Here you should provide an honest idea of what you think other people are thinking when they think of you, the good and bad things you imagine, the fantasies and illusions that you imagine other people may have about you, and the things you try to hide that you know they see anyway. What type of impression do you think you make?
- × **Level 2: Who are the people I define myself against?** Your response might take the form of a list and description of the people in your life who you think affect you the most, who you try to emulate, who you steer away from, who you associate with because you think it says something positive about you to be in

their presence, who you spend most of your time with and why. How do other people serve as mirrors for your self-definition?

- × **Level 3: What was I born with that I cannot get rid of?** This question deals with the physical things that define you or that you were born with: your sex, sexuality, race, nationality, history, accent, constraints, strengths. List everything that you can never change about yourself, or facts that you are stuck with, and the labels that society can put on you. And then think about the implications of those things and how you feel about them.
- × **Level 4: How have I evolved?** Now list the things you have chosen, the labels you have found in life which you were not born with: your career, interests, associations, roles, ways of being, loves, hatreds, and positions. Think about the things you struggle with and the things you are good at. Where has life taken you beyond the place you started at? How has your agency and self-determination played a part?
- × **Level 5: What is my fear for this life?** List everything you fear, the positive changes that you fear will never come, the events you fear most, the secrets you fear will be revealed, the life-destination that you most want to avoid, the people you fear seeing and why, and the life you never want to settle for. Think about how often these fears impact on your decisions.
- × **Level 6: What are my dreams and hopes for this life?** This final level I find is the most creative and the one where your soul actually feels relief after all the demanding self-discovery of the previous five levels. Think of the material and spiritual achievements you wish to reach, the things you would like to know, the places you want to go, the experiences you want to have, the types of people you want to be around. Think of what makes you happiest in life and what you would like to do more

of. Write about career goals you have, what type of legacy you would like to create for yourself. Think of the type of person you hope to present yourself as every day.

Ideas to reflect on: Ingrained-self; Action stemming from underlying drivers; Self-reflection; Habit; Constructing an identity.

Passion-Being

Living in passion-being is living in a moment of contentment, joy, inspiration, creativity and power. It is living in the fullness of your godliness. It is where you feel your connection to yourself and feel a sense of purpose, power, and self-worth, while doing the things that speak the deepest truth about you. Passion-being is being in the bodyplace, mindplace, emotionplace and soulplace of awakening. It encompasses a way of being which stems from awakening within a moment, shown through the actions and activities which express your deepest truth. In other words, passion-being is when your body and mind and emotions can reflect your awakening in a moment, and can be an extension of your awakening.

You can find your passion-being in three ways: an engagement with yourself, an engagement with the world, and an engagement with spirit. The most powerful state of passion-being is when these three spheres are in alignment, and when your engagements come from awakening on all three levels. So your passion-being could be found in thinking about and digesting life until it makes some kind of sense, exercising your body, playing an instrument or a sport, doing your job, laughing and being with loved-ones,

singing, creating, communicating and sharing with others, or meditating and bathing in your God-connection. It is the activities that infuse you with godliness and awakening. Each of us finds passion-being in different places.

Very few of us, however, are able to live in our passion-being for more than fleeting moments. You could have crystal clarity on the things that make you awake, powerful, joyful and in-tune, but you run away from ever doing these things. Also, you could simply be going through the motions of life, and never infuse passion-being into what you do every day. You might have become so stuck in a routine, or so invested in a particular idea, that you never reach for passion-being. For example, you could be invested in the idea that you do not have time to play the sport that you love playing, and every time you do play that sport you might have guilt that it is a waste of time. Or you might avoid seeing a friend you love because a factor of your relationship has changed, and you abandon all of the good parts of your friendship because of this.

A large part of what holds us back from constant passion-being is a fear of what passion-being entails: Are we worthy of having the joy which flows from it? What will other people think of us when we live in our passion-being? Essentially the fears we have surrounding our passion-being are external to the experience of it. You could avoid writing because you fear that you are not good enough at it, and you fear the judgement of others even though writing is a mode of expressing your passion-being. Sometimes those external feelings could come to define your moments of passion-being, and you see those moments, which are potentially the happiest and closest to god, as not really belonging to you, or as loaded with things you cannot control. So every time you play that sport which you love, you feel external to it, and you are not able to reach for awakening to your passion-being.

Passion-being is not being the best at something or being able to do something to impress others. It is, essentially, that process and state which allows for creativity, joy, togetherness and love in the highest form. Even if

you are extremely skilled in a certain field, the pursuit of this ability might still not be in alignment with your passion-being, as the activity does not allow you the enlightenment of spirit, mind and body which reflects your awakening within the moment.

If you are stuck in a situation which seems in opposition to your passion-being and which stifles your godliness and joy, you can find a way to use that situation to reach back towards passion-being. You can find a way to regain power over your surroundings. Even in overwhelming circumstances, your highest goal is the upliftment of yourself and those around you, and to reach for your passion-being. This is not simply the task of reaching for happiness in every situation, but rather it is the act of reaching for godliness, and finding a way to bring upliftment out of difficult situations. Happiness is merely the emotional reaction which sometimes corresponds with passion-being, but it does not define passion-being.

In overcoming these challenges, the first step is to allow yourself into moments and activities of passion-being despite the external feelings, to acknowledge the feelings as they present themselves, and to be awake to the reasons why you might be resisting your own passion-being. For example, if you know that exercise makes you feel connected to godliness, but external feelings cloud every experience of exercise and drain you emotionally, a possible strategy could be to exercise and let those feelings work themselves out, acknowledge them in the activity, and then examine those parts of your ingrained-self which causes the negative feelings to arise around the activity. If you know writing leads you to passion-being, but you are riddled with fear and insecurity about your writing ability, you could bring yourself into the space of writing and experience whatever it is that writing comes coupled with, until you can again see your passion-being. If meditation feels like a chore, you could find a form that makes you feel uplifted, or develop a strategy which transitions you easily into meditation and past the negative feelings.

The key is bringing yourself into the situation and looking at it from the inside out. This allows you to examine your ingrained-self and understand your resistance to your passion-being. It is important to remember that reaching for godliness is worth overcoming these negative emotions.

If you are constantly making excuses for avoiding your passion-being, and if it has been too long since you have experienced passion-being, you could start out with a few minutes at a time. Do those things which bring you to godliness again, even if you only do them a little bit at first. You will start to see how they infuse other aspects of your life as well. It is unrealistic to abandon responsibilities or established routines completely in the pursuit of passion-being, but it does not have to be in competition with the other aspects of your life. Take a few minutes to meditate or exercise or play a sport or listen to music, whatever it is that reflects godliness to you. Look for ways to incorporate passion-being into your everyday life. Slowly transform the stifling situation you might be in, into the situation where you thrive.

Waiting for motivation, inspiration and desire could take a very long time, and those factors can quickly become overshadowed by the demons of passion-being: those external factors which complicate the connection and create fear around commitment. The only way to experience passion-being is to be in the activities and places where it thrives, and to work through the uncertainties, going through the fundamentals first, and eventually to be settled in them, since we are loaded with so much resistance to joy because of our ingrained-self. Getting to know what your passion-being entails and committing to it is a powerful step in reaching for godliness.

Meditation

It might be useful to remind yourself of where your deepest passion-being lies, and to keep reminders in your physical space. This will allow you to awaken to that truth and the enlightenment which passion-being offers you every time you encounter the reminders. Use these questions as a starting point; the next few chapters will do more to help you unearth the reasons why you resist passion-being.

- × When do I feel like I am living in my passion-being in each of the following three spheres:
 - When I engage with myself?
 - When I engage with the world?
 - When I engage with spirituality?
- × What holds me back from living in passion-being?
- × What types of thoughts do I experience while doing the activities of my passion-being?

Ideas to reflect on: God-moment; Being stuck in routine; Investment in negative ideas about yourself; Motivation.



Bodyplace

There are two basic perceptions of the body that I find useful in my spiritual understandings. The first is that your body, just like your mind, is a tool for the expression of your passion-being. Your body offers possibilities for putting your passion-being into action. For example, if your soul is joyful at painting and visual creativity, your hands can allow you to paint and experience the passion-being around that activity. When you experience joy, fulfilment and love in preaching the truths you have experienced and when sharing your ideas, your voice can be a tool for allowing this passion to take form. Of course, the activity is not essential to the passion-being, but your body does offer you an important means of experiencing and expressing aspects of it. So your body is a tool, used to carry out action around your passion-being.

The second understanding of your body is that it is a physical manifestation of emotional states, and a manifestation of exactly the physical traits that your unique individual soul needs in order to experience itself in the highest possible way. Your body and mind are the ways that you experience individuality, so they are part of the necessary illusion of life in

order to experience humanity and godliness in dynamic ways. Your physical characteristics, and what you might consider physical constraints, are exactly the manifestation that your soul has chosen, and new physical states reflect new emotional or spiritual states through your body.

This does not mean that you can cure diseases solely with your feelings, or that if you are ill you should be resigned to illness because it is what your soul chose. The physical place you are in is very much a result of your past choices and emotional states. You might have breathing problems or weight issues because of your addictions to cigarettes or food, and what you do about the symptoms of these addictions is about the present, not the past. You need to digest the spiritual issues and ascertain the best course of action, so that you can best express your soulplace. An example of the way your body expresses emotional states is when you feel stress build up in your back and shoulders through pain and tension. When stress arises, you should not be resigned to an idea of yourself as stressed, but instead you can see it as a definite sign of your current emotional state. These physical symptoms are indicators so that you can process your current state and then take appropriate action.

When you develop a disease, it might be a sign of the way you have been treating your body, your mind and your soul in the past. This does not mean that you can just start doing, thinking or feeling differently and the disease will miraculously disappear, although doing, thinking and feeling differently are part of the process of healing and of maintaining health. You absolutely need to treat the causes of your bad health in order to find healing. But you have already reached a new unhealthy physical state. And sometimes you need to treat those symptoms immediately so that you can have enough time to treat the cause.

The physical as a manifestation of the spiritual also plays out in those physical traits that you were born with. These traits form a sort of framework for your spiritwork. If you are born in a specific place, of a specific race or

gender, you face a particular set of opportunities which your spirit might have chosen for you to face. The reassuring thing about this is that you are always prepared to deal with the circumstances in your life, because they are invoked by your soul and by the collective soul or God. And just because these circumstances feel like a given, the way you deal with them and understand them can be very different. You can choose to face them from a place of acceptance, love, joy and gratitude, or you can choose to resent them and wish that you were someone else. When you see that these physical traits offer you abundant chances for physical, mental and spiritual expression, or for the upliftment of yourself and those around you, you can be invested in ideas of yourself as capable, and effectively engage in your spiritwork.

The physical is not only about the things that you do, but it is also about the way you see yourself and the way you present yourself to be seen and experienced by others. Judgements are often made very quickly about the people we encounter based on their physical traits. Many people use the physical as cultural currency, trying to be the ideal of cultural beauty and class in order to gain some kind of social power. This is necessary for everyone to a certain degree in order to operate successfully in a society. You need to recognise that people are reading things off of your appearance, and that you are reading them as well. But then you also need to recognise that the way those people are reading you will probably not be exactly the way you think, that those interpretations are constantly shifting, and ideas of cultural currency based on physical appearance are not set in stone. The most important thing is to celebrate your body, to recognise convention and then see how far it works for you and resonates with your passion-being, and then to speak your soul's truth through your appearance, even though it might be jarring and difficult at the start for you to adjust to. Your soul's truth is beauty, health, joy, and passion, and you need to find ways of expressing these factors that resonate with your physical traits.

What holds many people back from physical expression and physical and mental health, and from maintaining and uplifting the tools of body and mind which contain so much potential for the expression of passion-being, is that they become invested in a distorted idea of themselves as unhealthy. This is not the same as saying that these people experience moments of bad health as we all do, but instead they become invested in the idea of bad health as fundamental to their understanding of themselves. I call this view of oneself ‘distorted’ because, by definition, your passion-being is evolving, growing and thriving in all spheres, and when you see yourself as incapable or unable to let that passion-being grow, you are not in alignment with understanding your highest truth. When you see yourself as ‘stupid’ and become invested in that idea, you resist your own wisdom and your own ability to express your passion-being through ideas, knowledge and creativity. When you see yourself as ‘emotionally unstable’ and become invested in that idea, you resist your ability to reach higher states of emotional wellbeing and to be emotionally in-tune with other people. When you see yourself as ‘fat’, ‘lazy’, ‘unhealthy’ and ‘ugly’, and you become invested in those ideas, you resist your chance to come from the health that characterises your deepest truth. You start to see exercise and eating healthily as a chore. And you become results-driven and constantly frustrated that you have not achieved the body that you want. How can you when you are still invested in being ‘ugly’?

The reason why I refer to your self-image as being invested in an idea of yourself is because it is really about agency and not simply about external factors. While these external factors definitely play a part and can greatly influence the self-image of a person, your understandings of yourself are not static, and you are not powerless in their definition. You can reinterpret and re-inscribe these definitions. A child might be brought up in poverty and be told that she is poor all her life, but still she has the potential to not be invested in that idea about herself, and rather invest in an idea of prosperity.

Someone might be surrounded by ideas of hatred, such as a family all sharing a prejudice and trying to enforce it on every member, but one member of that family might not be invested in that idea and be able to see love instead. He or she does not see him- or herself as a hateful person, even though his or her surroundings might enforce this self-image.

That is why it is important to start by investing in an idea of your own health and beauty. Your bodyplace is not only the physical aspects of your being, but also the ideas which you have become invested in around those physical aspects. So not only your physical traits are important, but also the way you interpret those traits, and your relationship with them. When you can align the idea of health with your passion-being, you can find that it is part of the deepest truth about yourself: that your body is functional, dynamic, able, strong and can be a powerful tool to express your passion-being, no matter what your physical characteristics are. Cultural currencies change all the time, and ideas about beauty are constructed and often based on power-relations within a society. So when you can come from a place of beauty, which is a place of reverence and love for the amazing vessel that your body is, you do not need to worry about those conventions and whether you fit the bill or not. You fit the bill of your soul, and of God, because you were created in this vessel by Her.

What if your body is ill or paralysed or disabled in some way? Does this negate your ability to express your passion-being? The deepest truth of the matter, despite any physical constraints, is that there is no limit to the expression of passion-being. This is because passion-being is part of your soulplace, mindplace, emotionplace, and bodyplace. If one of your means of expression is different from what you would consider the ideal, for example your bodyplace for experiencing passion-being is incapable of some form of expression, you still have the deepest part of your soul for expressing your passion-being. Your mind and body are tools, but they are not necessary for knowing and loving and experiencing. You need to find ways to use the

abilities that you do have, and do the best that you can to experience that place of health, beauty and passion which is part of your deepest truth. And by finding new ways of experiencing health with your own capabilities, you will be engaging with one of the fundamental parts of your passion-being: creativity. No matter what your physical situation may be, you can still come from that place in your soul of living in passion-being, and of looking at your situation through love.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What do I like most about my body?
- × What do I dislike most about my body?
- × Why do I think I have the exact body that I have? How is it an expression of my soulplace?
- × How do I use my body to express and experience my passion-being?

Ideas to reflect on: Body as a tool; Physical manifestation of emotional states; Distorted view as unhealthy; Investment in an idea of yourself.

Home

Your surroundings have power over you. This is an idea you might have picked up on in the discussion of your nature, where you are thrust into a particular situation in life which, to a great extent, determines your ingrained-self. So, the physical realm is an extension of the spiritual realm, and it can also have an influence over the spiritual realm, affecting your state of being.

Many different philosophies have dealt with the relationship between space and spirit, and some claim that spaces can affect our moods, thoughts and actions. You can notice this when you feel a sudden shift when you move into a certain room of your house: how a room might allow you to work or read easily, how you prefer to discuss certain topics in a particular room, or how you feel stifled or uncomfortable in another. We can also attach emotional links to certain spaces, and have powerful positive or negative associations with them. The discussion of home starts to touch on how you relate to your surroundings, a topic which is dealt with in greater detail throughout Part Two. This discussion will focus on the personal and intimate spaces, and the things you choose to fill them with. The aim is to

reach consciousness of these spaces, and to shape them into alignment with your spirit.

The idea of home could refer to many things. You could see home as the place where you come from, and the space you are tied to. You could see it as the place you have chosen for yourself, the place you choose to identify with. Or it could be a place you have been living in for a long time, by choice or not, which has come to mean a great deal to you. Essentially, home is the place which has the greatest power to define you, the place which has had the greatest effect on your ingrained-self, which is the greatest canvass for your expression, and the greatest stage for your experience of life. It can be seen as a place which you have a spiritlink with, be it in a positive or negative way. It often encompasses more than one place.

Many of us have tumultuous relationships with the idea of home. Often, if we are living outside of ourselves, home might remind us of the person we are trying to run away from, and for that reason we avoid consciousness of home. It is also a space which very often reflects the ideas we are most invested in, and which showcases our darkest internalities. Some of us have been trying to escape home for our entire lives, but have found that it is something we are never able to do. You can transcend the situations which might have brought about many of your great traumas in life, but you can never remove the spiritlink to home. Even if you have left the physical space many years ago, it still serves to define you, and has had a great effect on your ingrained-self.

Another important aspect of home is the people we share it with, and how the space becomes a factor of our relationships. Even if you live alone right now, you have shared a home with someone before. This relationship with others in an intimate space is often the cause of many of our ingrained-self associations with home. Many different agents are interacting on the same canvass, across the same stage, and often there are collisions. Home is

a space where we learn to negotiate ourselves around other people. It is also the place where we make many, many mistakes in our interactions.

Looking closely at the dynamics of the different people in your home can be an important tool for consciousness of your space. You could see these interactions as great mirrors for how you interact with the world more broadly; in fact they are your initial and most affecting mirrors. For example, your submissiveness to your brother could reflect a deeper unhappiness. Your passive-aggressiveness with your roommate might point to an underlying prejudice. The way you help your partner through a difficult situation might demonstrate the depths of your compassion. How you smile at your colleague every morning might reflect your kindness. The people who you share a home with are following your example of humanity as well as providing you with examples of humanity. You are mutually demonstrating models of love and fear, which provide opportunities for the experience or expression of both parties. What you demonstrate or are witness to within your home often affects what you experience outside of home. So home is not simply the physical space, it is also the people in that space.

Further than that, it is also the things you choose to fill that space with. We are not simply thrust into home. There is also a great deal of agency involved. You choose what to surround yourself with to a great extent. The things you expose yourself to every day, from TV shows to pictures to music to wallpaper, have subtle yet direct and accumulative effects on you. So how should you fill your space in a way which is uplifting for your spirit? Should you seek to accumulate as much as possible in your physical space?

A part of why many people have so much spiritual confusion is because the spiritual principles we read about are fundamentally contradictory. Some tell us that we should work towards what we want in body, mind and spirit, and aggrandise ourselves as much as possible, often in a selfish and egotistical way. We should go after what we want in life, and this should be

our primary motivation. Others say that the ego is bad and that we should reach only for spirit and presence, and abandon material objectives in life since they often only serve to feed the ego. How do you reach clarity on your relationship to the physical and material realm in light of the conflict of ego and spirit? How do you live in beauty and comfort, while being in a space of spiritual enlightenment and grace at the same time? Is opulence necessarily a bad thing?

Of course, this is a question we all need to answer for ourselves. But the deepest truth of the matter is that very often the things in our lives, and working towards more things, can very much hold us back from our spiritwork. A useful way to think about it is to assess your surroundings and your desires in terms of either opulence or upliftment. So you might ask the questions: If I want this new thing, whatever it may be, will it add value to my life? Will it be functional and uplifting? Will it bring me joy and be a tool for my passion-being? This could be a useful reflection in reaching consciousness of the things we surround ourselves with, and how they affect our soulplace.

The big distinction is between the ideas of having-to-be or being-to-have. How does your spiritual state lead to stuff, and does the stuff affect your spiritual state? How much power do you have over your surroundings and the things in your life, and how much power do they have over you? When you are having-to-be, you are using the things in your life as propellers towards higher evolution. You are seeing your possessions and your surroundings as opportunities to be your highest self. When you are being-to-have, you are simply existing in a state of being defined by your externalities. You need to own more to make you feel like more. Your surroundings determine who you are, and you abandon your deeper truths.

Our ideas about home and our relationships with home affect us greatly. Indeed, we have a permanent spiritlink with these physical spaces. This permanent spiritlink to home becomes a part of ourselves, another part which

we can bring into the light of awakening. To become conscious of our connection to home means looking at all of those intimate spaces and their effects on our ingrained-self, as well as the way our current homes reflect our deepest selves. Ideally, home can be seen as a space of comfort, where you can flourish and express your passion-being, a place which is functional and uplifting for everyone who shares it. So, is your home a reflection of who you really are? Is the place which you have a spiritlink with truly a reflection of your soulplace?

Many of these discussions, such as our relationships with other people and the ideas of possession and attachment, will be continued in Part Two. This initial discussion is aimed at promoting thought about your relationship to the external, and how it affects the intimate and personal.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What is my home? Which place or places do I associate with the idea of 'home'?
- × How do I feel about the homes I have lived in before?
- × Who are the people who have influenced my perception of home?
- × How do I feel in different sections of my current home? Why do I feel that way in that particular space?
- × Which physical things in my home reflect my soulplace? What might be stifling my soulplace?

Ideas to reflect on: Physical as extension of spiritual; Emotional associations with spaces; Consciously shaping spaces; Spiritlink to home; Opulence and upliftment; Having-to-be and Being-to-have.



Time

We are in state of temporal progression. Things are moving forward, and there is nothing we can do about it. With time comes change. There will either be growth, deterioration or new circumstances. This fourth dimension of our existence gives life the quality of transience. Whatever your relationship to the physical and situated aspects of life may be, time ensures that these aspects will eventually change. It is the ultimate paradox of our existence – a progression which is going nowhere. We have no checklist for what we need to own or accomplish before our time is up, and whatever we do accumulate in life is ultimately not ours. We are situated in life, but always we are kept at a remove due to the impact of time, and the knowledge that things will change or will eventually deteriorate and disappear.

The progression of time is a potent reminder of our spiritual existence. The transience of the world of things reminds us that we are more than the things we encounter, and that those things cannot define us. Indeed, the certainty of change has inspired many to seek for universalities and fundamentals which they can hold on to, and often the fear of time has inspired people to turn to spirituality. Behind that and around that is the

duality of our existence: both spirituality and physicality, both situated in time and existing as more than time can constrain.

Why, then, does time exist? Why are we not simply in a state of finality always, where things do not need to change because they are already and always perfect? Why do we exist in a state of incompleteness, instead of a state where we do not reach, desire or hope? Many people see this ideal conception of a timeless and changeless world as nirvana or heaven. But time and its consequences serve a very important function in our spiritwork.

A part of the goal of this book is to look very closely at the way things work, and to seek to find meaning behind those mechanics. This is, necessarily, a process steeped in discourse and subjectivity, which is why so many open questions are employed for you to reach your own understandings. I am approaching the question of time within a paradigm of spiritwork and awakening, and in this framework, time becomes an essential ingredient. Both concepts refer to processes, reaching towards higher states of experience and expression in line with the meaning of life. And since these are processes, they rely on progression and time, and also, they can never be finished. Your spiritwork will never be finished. You will never reach your highest possible level of awakening. There is always further to go and more to experience and express.

Without time there is no creativity, because there is no uncertainty. We would not be able to start a new project, watch something develop, and deal with consequences in creative ways. So the slow progression of time is essential to the processes of awakening, experience, and expression.

However, the uncertainty associated with time can inspire fear in many people. We become frightened of the implications of ageing, and feel a sense of pressure if we have not attained 'completeness' by a certain age. Many of us compare ourselves to other people by using age-based markers of how much 'progress' we should have made through life at a particular point. For example, you could be disappointed that you are 45 and do not know what

you want to do with your life. Or when you are 30 and you have not secured your ideal life-partner. Or when you are 25 and you are not financially independent. Or you are 60 and you do not know how to ride a bike. You imagine that by this point in your life, you should have mastered certain things.

But you are living your own life. You are progressing along your own path, and having your own experiences in life which needs to be self-determined. Your individual soulplace has fashioned an existence which will allow it to experience and express on the highest level possible within its own framework. So you need to look at your own progress as simply that: your own. Unnecessary pressure and comparisons to other people might lead to living outside of yourself, trying to be something that you think you should be, instead of what you are.

Time also promises that eventually we will face our own death. Negotiating our reaction to death is a dynamic process. We model our ideas of death based on many factors, including our own spiritual understandings, our experiences of the deaths of others, and societal values. We also have different reactions depending on our own proximity to death. Philosophers have seen death as the factor which infuses vigour and flavour into life, spurring action since it will eventually render us actionless. Death becomes a driver in life, something which we mourn as it signals an ending and reminds us of our own future endings. Religions often see death as a rite of passage before a new life, the afterlife, can begin. But what is clear is that death is infused with the same character as time: uncertainty. It is the ultimate uncertainty, since it seems impossible to measure our experiences or modes of expression after our physical lives end. This character of uncertainty has led many spiritual thoughts to focus on the moment of death and the afterlife. But how do you deal with your understanding of death in your awakening, right now?

Looking at death lovingly is an awareness of the transience of life. It is an acknowledgement of the beauty of the process which we are a part of. Finding meaning in death allows us to make it a moment in alignment with our spiritwork. We can see death as the moment of true appreciation for the process that was, the process which has ended, and as a testament to the magnificence of a process which continues. This is done in the honouring of those who have died, and remembering yet letting go. Mourning is often a dark process, something which evokes anger and immense sorrow. Yet it is the very appreciation of a life which inspires this reaction. It is the very love which you have shared with another person which makes you look at the loss with sorrow. It is important to remember here that this love can never disappear and never end. It is a part of something greater, the soulplace of both of you, and that place endures forever. Coming to an understanding of our own death and the death of others is a part of the process of awakening to life in its fullness.

So, time brings many opportunities as well as many limits. There are many ways that people try to overcome the limits of time. Some try to accumulate as much as they possibly can in their lives, and to brand their name onto objects in the world which they believe will maintain their impact. We try to convince ourselves and others that we are younger or older than we actually are, altering our appearance or surroundings in a way that we think is culturally valued. We stagnate and become stuck in a comfort zone, pretending that the process of life has already ended for us.

At times these strategies can be another way that people live outside of themselves, and outside of their deepest spiritual truth, namely that we are not defined by our surroundings. You might choose to focus on what you see as the negative aspects of time, and to fight them as much as you can. You might choose to avoid acknowledgment of your progression through life and your eventual death. You might try to accumulate enough markers that tell you that you are the master of time. The pace of our lives might also lead us

to live outside of ourselves. Often we could become impatient, and we want to be or have something immediately. We become frustrated when it does not come immediately. Often we will feel that our time is going too quickly. These are often signs that we are not being present within every moment of our lives, and that we are fighting against the slow process of time.

But fighting against time is fighting against an unavoidable truth. Instead, moving into a state of awareness about your own reaction to the pace of processes, and an awareness of ageing and death, could lead to a greater appreciation for these factors in your own life.

While there are many dangers with past- or future-oriented perceptions of reality, there is value in honouring the passage of time. Being aware of the past and the future is part of an empowered existence. Being aware of history and preserving heritage is part of the development of a society, as well as part of the development of the individual's ingrained-self. Planning for the future and nurturing growth is a way to move towards higher levels personally and collectively.

When we can look at the uncertainty associated with time and value it as a part of the process, we can reach towards enlightenment, and understand the baggage we carry around ageing and death. Acknowledging the slow process of life is a part of experiencing this process fully. The lesson of time is that you are always incomplete, and that reaching back to incompleteness is a part of awakening.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × Think of some times when you have been impatient with a certain situation, when you have wanted the end to come before you have even begun. Reflect on the process which you had to go through anyway, despite your resistance to it. How did this process affect you, positively or negatively?
- × Are there any ways that you try to fight against the limits of time, in your thoughts or actions? Are these efforts in alignment with your passion-being, or are they manifest from your ingrained-self? This question might require deep reflection, and the answer again might be either positive or negative.
- × What is your understanding of death? What types of feelings does the thought of death inspire in you?

Ideas to reflect on: Transience; Progression; The slow process of awakening; Uncertainty; Understanding death; Attempts to overcome the limits of time.

Mindplace

The mind is the centre for dealing with information and decoding perception. Our minds are involved with processing, understanding, memory and learning. The mindplace of our being can be seen as a web of processes which determine how we deal with new information. The mind is, in this way, concerned with creating structure and order out of the diverse stimuli which we encounter every day.

Since the mind is a place of interwoven processes which relies on structure and order, it is necessarily a sphere of your being which can be conditioned and refocused. The way that our mind processes information is determined within particular frameworks, and any new information is processed within these frameworks. For example, our particular areas of interest or expertise could alter our perception of a particular film or novel. If you are a medical doctor, you might have a completely different view of a film dealing with disease than someone who is a social worker. So your mind seeks to incorporate what you perceive into the established structures which it has constructed throughout your development.

Since the mind is concerned with the structural frameworks of logic and rationality, it has sometimes been set in opposition to the soulplace of our being. This is, after all, a sphere which cannot be tangibly perceived or measured, and which seems to rely on a different form of logic to your mindplace, namely intuition, faith, and trusting in what you cannot perceive. Are we meant to abandon mindplace in order to enter soulplace? Some types of spiritual practices seem to demand this of us, where we abandon rational thought in order to enter into spiritual awakening. But how useful can your mindplace be in spiritual growth?

Just like the bodyplace, the mindplace constitutes a large part of our experience of the world of things. We deal with concepts and understandings, we process stimuli through frameworks, and we try to make sense of new experiences so that they fit into those frameworks.

Our mindplace could be framed by religion, tradition, politics or prejudice. These frames could fundamentally affect our view of our surroundings. For example, if you grow up in a traditionally misogynistic household and those prejudices have filtered into your framework of gender, you will experience every person you encounter with the idea of hierarchy based on gender. If you have grown up to believe in a certain religion, your ideas of right and wrong or good and bad will be shaped by this framework. We are always experiencing the world through many of these frameworks, and even our experience of the different aspects of our being, namely our bodyplace, emotionplace and soulplace, are affected by frameworks. Your self-concept is a product of your mindplace.

Your mindplace is also the mechanism able to perceive time and space. It is the sphere of your being which is able to place your self-concept within the world of things. Your mindplace could help you come to presence through perceiving and situating your self-concept within a particular moment. It is able to witness and assess the slow processes of life, and reach

understandings from these processes. It is also able to form attachments to spaces and have a coherent idea of home.

Within this understanding of the mindplace as a sphere consisting of frameworks and perception, there is a clear interaction between the old and the new, the established and the dynamic. Your frameworks are formed, yet you are not finished. You have not stopped the mindplace processes which continue to form new frameworks and new ideas, ideas which impact on your ingrained-self. This is where the level of creativity becomes important. This is the aspect of your mindplace which allows us to envision solutions for difficulties, to transcend situations which feel impossible to move beyond, or to discover greatness and newness in your expressions. Creativity is looking beyond, enacting our godliness through the aspects of power, beauty and joy. We are able to practice the expression of our unique being on the canvass of the world.

The power of creativity cannot be overemphasised. When our mindplace can see further than what is, and into what could be, we are entering the sphere of transcendence. When a child can read a book and see the possibilities of a different life, that life becomes much easier for her or him to attain. When you can visualise a solution to a problem, you can move into alignment with that solution. Exercising your creativity becomes vital for attaining even higher levels of transcendence. You could be creative through any act which reminds you of the slow process of transcendence, something which requires you to be dynamic and to experience or express newness. The reward is seeing something grow, and experiencing the deepest godly nature of your being: the power to have an impact, to shape something in a new way or influence something or someone to develop. When you can be creative, you can refocus and recondition the established frameworks of your mindplace, and open a space for new levels of growth.

It is important to understand the implications of saying that the mindplace is a sphere which can be conditioned and refocused. This refers to

the fields of habit, addiction, phobias, passions, dreams and prejudices. These are mental frameworks which form part of our ingrained-self, but they are also, by implication, things which can and do change as we move through life. We also have a great deal of agency over refocusing things ourselves, since we are creative beings. When we can look closely at the mental frameworks which might already be etched into our ingrained-self, we can find creative ways to refocus our being into alignment with awakening and enlightenment. How, then, do you actively refocus your mental frameworks? What can you do right now to begin to move into enlightenment?

The answer is through breaking patterns of thought. Your mindplace is the hub of thoughts, which can quickly lead your entire being into different modes. Thoughts are like the gear lever of your being, and can have a major effect on your emotionplace. The power of thoughts is widely referred to in many spiritual philosophies. It is definitely true that since thoughts can shift us into different modes of being, they can absolutely shift us into different spheres of expression and experience. The world will look different to us, and we will interact with it differently, depending on our patterns of thought.

This does not mean that one new thought today will change our lives, but we need to find new patterns of thoughts in order to replace the patterns of thoughts which have led to stifling modes of being. And then, these new patterns of thoughts need to be reinforced by engaging our bodyplace, emotionplace and soulplace into new frameworks in alignment with these thoughts. You cannot think positively, yet still not exercise or not look for a new job or not speak to new people, and then wonder why you are still overweight, unemployed or single. Your actions need to be in alignment with these new thoughts.

Of course, this will be incredibly difficult at first. This is because you already have established frameworks, and you already have an established self-concept. And all of these established ideas might be in opposition to the new thoughts or actions you are moving towards. But only through time,

through a process, will you be able to make these new thoughts become a part of your ingrained-self. Only through constantly and consciously focusing your energy in alignment with your true self, will that self be able to emerge confidently and consistently.

Your thoughts can be an important step in refocusing your mental frameworks. You can experience the toxicity of negative thoughts, and the upliftment of positive thoughts, when these patterns of thinking start to affect the other aspects of your being. Many people think that their thoughts simply run on autopilot, and that they do not need to be conscious of their patterns of thought. But really your mindplace is never running on autopilot. These automatic thoughts, or your current frame of mind and current thought patterns, are based on your ingrained-self. Just as you are always acting out of something deeper, you are always thinking out of something deeper. And the only way to refocus this is to be conscious and aware of your thoughts, and to closely examine your frameworks.

Meditation


Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × How do you think your mindplace can be a tool for spiritual growth?
- × What types of mental frameworks do you think that you currently carry in your ingrained-self? These could involve prejudices, spiritual and religious ideas, ideas about society, or deep-seated angers and frustrations with the world.
- × What types of thought-patterns do you currently hold? Think especially about thoughts that seem to recur for you, dreams

which you can remember, or fantasies which you think might have deeper meaning.

- × What types of thought-patterns do you think would bring you in alignment with your deepest truth? How would these new thoughts need to be reinforced by appropriate actions? How difficult do you think it will be for you to adopt these new thoughts or actions in your life?
- × What type of creativity puts you in-tune with your godly nature, and is an expression of your individuality? How do you nurture this creativity?

Ideas to reflect on: Logic and rationality as opposed to spirituality; Self-concept; Mental frameworks; Perception of time and space; Creativity; Sphere of transcendence; Patterns of thoughts.



Openness and Readiness

Since your mindplace is the sphere of your being which perceives time, it is also the sphere which is most concerned with the implications of time: your mindplace resists change and uncertainty. It tries to maintain its current structure, since this structure is what it uses in its perception of the world. If not, we would always be immediately shifting to any new stimulus, and we would have no coherent sense of self. If our mindplace were less stubborn, we would have no way to meaningfully engage with the world as an individual, since we would become whatever we momentarily experience.

Yet this tendency to retain current frames of mind and to resist change can also delay our transcendence when we become invested in our current state. We fail to see potential and space to grow. Our mindplace discerns the things which might jeopardise its current state, and closes off avenues to these new factors, even if these new factors could lead to our spiritual evolution.

Your mindplace can thus be seen as a gateway, one which can either be open and ready, or closed and resistant to newness, growth, and change. You can become aware of the things which your mindplace is resisting, and if

they are things which are in alignment with your highest self, you can reach for a state of openness and readiness. Openness and readiness is a mental framework which allows for the flowing of spirit and the transcendence of self. It is the ability to recognise the fears and hesitations of mindplace, which might be fighting against development because this involves change. And once you have identified your resistances to development, openness and readiness allows you to move past them, around them and beyond them in order to invite growth and love into your life.

Openness and readiness is also the moment of bringing yourself into the field of experience of the things in alignment with your passion-being. You need to be familiar with the things that resonate with your soul in order to evolve in that aspect, instead of closed-off to that particular field of experience. That means that you should already be doing the things that your soul wants to do, and experiencing the things your soul wants to experience, on a regular basis. If your passion-being is found around the activity of singing, you cannot experience higher levels of singing without becoming familiar with that field of experience. You cannot become a better singer or experience new aspects of this passion-being unless you are already invested in that field of experience. Many people delay their passion-being because they desire to instantly achieve a certain ideal: they do not simply want to sing, but they want to be a famous singer with a large audience. However, your passion-being does not require these external factors, and you cannot reach higher levels of experiencing your passion-being if you are not experiencing it in the here and now.

Being in a state of openness and readiness means that you already allow this avenue of godliness to flow, and in that way you can invite higher levels of passion-being into your life. This does not necessarily mean that you will end up where you had once hoped, but where you will be right now is in the moment of passion-being, and of expressing your deepest and truest self. What you are opening yourself up to is higher levels of experience and

expression of your passion-being. By already immersing yourself in the field of experience which defines your passion-being, you are allowing that passion-being to evolve.

This can lead to many dangerous misconceptions. Immersing yourself within a field of experience absolutely does not mean living beyond your means, or abandoning responsibility in order to satisfy desires. It does not necessarily mean that you should quit your job right now in order to pursue your singing career, since for most of us that simply is not a viable option. It also does not mean that you should spend more money than you have in order to have the illusion of the life you desire. Very, very often, our mindplace will be completely unprepared for sudden shifts like these, and your resistances to development will surface to the point where you potentially sabotage these endeavours.

However, it does mean making inroads towards your passion-being within the framework of where you already are. When you pour your heart and soul into something, miracles happen. But these miracles cannot always substitute a steady income or an established routine. You need to work with where you are and find space for openness and readiness within that. Reaching a state of openness and readiness has to do with reconditioning the mindplace. Your entire way of thinking needs to change, and since the mindplace is so resistant to change, you need to gradually introduce new habits to substitute old ones. If you know that eating and watching hours of television is your cure for boredom, and that it makes you feel miserable and unhealthy, you cannot substitute this with a crash diet and a three-hour per day exercise regime. Your mindplace will completely resist this, and you will not be able to maintain it for more than a few days. You need to find a gradual way to introduce the behaviour which does resonate with your truest self. These gradual inroads to godliness are part of openness and readiness. For example, you could cut out one portion of the extra food you take in per week, or make a rule that for every unhealthy food you eat, you have to eat

one portion of fruit or vegetables. Or, you could place your treadmill in front of the television so that you can do a few minutes while watching a show. Openness and readiness is not about shocking the system, but about gently coaxing your resistant mindplace into behaviours and places which take your entire being to higher levels.

By bringing yourself into the field of experience where you are already living your passion-being, you can begin to evolve within this passion-being. Even if you are busy with your job and family all day, you could take ten minutes out of your lunch-break to practice your singing, or you could spend one Saturday a month auditioning for singing positions. In this way, you are incorporating your passion-being into your current routine, instead of simply putting it off since you claim to never have the time. Not having the time is a frame of mind, and it is a frame of mind often influenced by fear. When you can begin the difficult process of bringing yourself into a godly field of experience which you might have built up many resistances towards, you can begin to shift these fear-based perceptions of your reality.

Why would your mindplace resist something which is in alignment with your highest self? The barriers which our mindplace has created in response to certain fields of experience are the results of past experience and of routine. We have learned that very often, when we take a chance at something, we could fail. We have experienced the hurt of rejection or the danger of being out of our comfort zones. Or, we have simply become so used to feeling miserable and surviving on 'autopilot' that we no longer reach towards awakening. The human condition is marked by these moments when our situations are not what we would ideally want. When you suffer loss, fear or difficulty, openness and readiness is the ability to see avenues to godliness.

A state of openness and readiness is not a state of expectancy, but at the same time it is a state of preparedness. When you can look at a situation with love, you know that new levels of experience and expression will flow from

it. Being prepared for these new levels is part of being open and ready for them to come about. Your preparedness will flow from immersing yourself within the frame of experience which defines your passion-being. When you can love a situation for what it is, and be prepared to transcend it when avenues open, you are in a state of openness and readiness. When you can be creative and proactive in your approach to passion-being, you are in a state of openness and readiness.

Your mindplace is not simply your mental processes, but also the impact which those processes have on other aspects of your being. So once you can change your frame of mind and your thoughts, you can change your way of being. While caution is often a wise choice, it can also be used as an excuse to maintain stagnant frames of mind, and as reinforcement for fear-based perceptions. Gradually moving deeper into your passion-being allows you to slowly refocus your energy and move into higher states of being.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What types of fear-based perceptions do you hold about living in your passion-being?
- × How have your past experiences made it difficult for you to live in a state of openness and readiness?
- × How can you incorporate inroads to godliness in your life right now? What will it take for you to gradually incorporate them into your existing routine?

Ideas to reflect on: Resistances to development; Field of experience; Inroads to passion-being; Fear-based perception of reality.

The logo for 'Emotionplace' features a blue rectangular background on the left. Inside this rectangle, the letter 'E' is written in a large, elegant, black cursive script. To the right of the 'E', the word 'emotionplace' is written in a black, serif font, with the 'E' overlapping the start of the word.

Emotionplace

Sometimes the human emotional sphere feels like a turbulent, nonsensical, and irrational part of our being. Popular thought has even positioned emotion in opposition to reason, warning of the dangers of making choices based on emotion. Emotions can become overwhelming, and often there is a lack of understanding and even a sense of resignation around the workings of this part of our being, especially the ‘negative’ emotions. Emotions are linked to many psychological ills, where psychology can be understood as the relationship between the mind and emotions. For example, chronic unhappiness affects the way we think and in turn affects the way we act, and this is called depression. Severe emotional instability, shown thorough heightened levels of euphoria and then extreme unhappiness, again affects the way we think and act, and is called bipolar disorder. Just as there is an important link between the emotions and the mind, there is also a link between emotions and the body: chronic stress leads to ulcers or heightened blood-pressure, and physical activity can lead to emotional wellness. But where do emotions come from? Is there any point to them? And why is it so easy to let our emotions influence our decisions and affect us so greatly?

The purpose of emotions is multifaceted. It has to do with the meaning of our existence, as well as emotions as a measure of our proximity to passion-being. Emotions also arise as a reaction to our fixation on certain thought patterns which conflict with our soul's truths. Our emotional reactions can rarely be ascribed to a single one of these aspects, since they are often interrelated, and a single emotional response could be symptomatic of changes within many aspects of our being.

Emotions arise in order to facilitate the fulfilment of the meaning or purpose of our existence. In essence, this purpose is to express and experience. We are here to be here, and to be here as fully as possible. We are an expression of godliness, and we impress of ourselves on our surroundings. This is what passion-being is: reflecting your godliness through being, and reflecting the truths of your individual self through various forms of expression. We are also here to experience on many levels, which is why our being is made up of so many aspects. Our emotionplace is one of those spheres of experience. It is a way of relating to the world, and it is a way of understanding our humanity more intimately. Our emotional reactions have been planted in our ingrained selves, but they are also evolving, and this evolution leads to new experiences. We re-evaluate and feel differently about events, about the past and the future, at different points in our lives, and these add to our wealth of experience. To rephrase: your emotions add depth to your experiences in life, and these experiences and understandings affect the person who you are and the way you express yourself. So emotions are another link between you and the events and situations of your life. Your emotions can be an indication of your current state of being, and emotional evolution to a large degree corresponds with the evolution of your entire being.

Emotions also let us know to some degree whether we are in alignment with our passion-being. If you wake up every morning feeling miserable, fearful, or resentful, chances are you are not living in alignment with your

passion-being. If you look at your day-planner and feel happy, excited and optimistic, chances are you are living in your passion being. Our emotional reactions to the various aspects of our lives demonstrate to us our level of awakening within each moment, and emotions also assist us with evaluating the experiences which we have every day. On a basic level, happiness is the positive emotional reaction to stimuli perceived as positive. Sadness is the negative emotional experience to stimuli perceived as negative. We are, at least to some degree, programmed to have certain emotional responses to certain situations or events based on our ingrained selves. For example, our understanding of family and death and love which we have formed early in our lives might affect our emotional responses to these events when they occur in our lives later on. But again, these responses can evolve as we become more aware of them. Our emotions, thus, let us know whether we are living our soul's truth, and whether the things we experience everyday are in alignment with this truth or not. We measure these aspects through positive or negative emotional reactions.

But this is only the most basic level of our emotionplace. There is also a range of emotions within the distinction between positive and negative, and not all of them are purely reactionary. Sometimes events in themselves bring forth appropriate emotional reactions, but we also have a great deal of agency about our emotions. For example, gratitude is noticing the positive things that are there that you might not necessarily think about, and having a positive emotional reaction to this recognition. Despair is the exact opposite, where you notice the negative things that are around you and focus on them, and feel the negative emotions surrounding them. So our emotions are a measure of our experiences, and how these experiences relate to our passion-being and our ingrained selves, but we are not simply passive in this interaction between experience and emotion. Emotions are not simply inflicted on us, and no emotion is an end point. They are meant to be propellers for our own

agency and expression, and lead us toward those things which feed our passion-being.

The final significance of emotions is that they link closely to mental processes of fixation and letting go. Often negative emotions accompany the desire to control situations which are impossible for you to control, or to hold on tightly to things which are transient. This does not mean that you should not love and cherish what surrounds you, but when loving and holding dear turns into a reliance on the illusions of life, negative emotions will often warn you about this. This is part of our predicament in life, and these feelings show up in everyone at one point or another. It is part of our innate conflict between our eternal and all-powerful transcendent parts, and those parts of us living in the world of individuality, transience, temporality and experience. That is why there is so much power in letting go. That is why relief and joy flow from the act of surrender. We start to embrace both parts of our being, and surrender to limitations of the latter without resentment or fear or anger. For many people this surrender takes the form of looking to the highest power and understanding the limitations of our own situations.

Our emotions will often guide us in terms of this innate conflict, and let us know when we become overinvested in wanting to control the illusions of life and hold onto them. This could take the form of wanting to control your partner, or wanting to hoard possessions, or being chronically resentful of the choices of your children. Letting go lovingly is part of reaching emotional maturity and embracing both aspects of your being. This does not mean that you should relinquish all of your influence over the people and things in your life, since you are still a powerful being who is meant to experience and express. But it should be clear that the emotional overinvestment in a desire to control and hold on to something is not in alignment with your highest truth. The negative emotions which accompany the desire to control, and the realisation that you are not in complete control, is a type of warning system.

It is warning you to respect the individuality and limitations of yourself and others.

Why is it so easy to let our emotions run our lives and affect us so greatly? Mainly, this is due to the fact that we do not let our emotions serve to guide our lives, but instead we let them define our lives. Many times we become consumed with resentment that our sadness will not go away, or we spend all our time in the pursuit of happiness. We are seeing emotions as an end in themselves, or as defining characteristics of who we are. Looking at emotions as experiences, as measures of passion-being, and as signs of when to let go could be a powerful step in reaching understanding of our emotionplace.

Your emotionplace ties together all of your ingrained emotional responses, your reactionary emotions and your emotional agency. There is also necessarily a link to your mindplace, your bodyplace and your soulplace. That is why sometimes emotions can manifest in physical distress or mental disorder. That is why the soul can become numbed by extreme reliance on a particular emotion, and you can forget your godliness in these moments. That is why you can make yourself sick with worry or guilt or despair, and can laugh yourself into health. Understanding your emotionplace is a process of observing your reactions, of learning to let go, of embracing emotions however they come and experiencing them, and also of taking agency over your own emotions. Taking agency means reaching for your passion-being, even though the road to it might be littered with difficult emotional reactions. It means choosing gratitude over despair. It means listening to emotions, working through them, understanding their link to your ingrained-self, and letting go of resentment in situations which are out of your control. It means making choices which are in alignment with your passion-being and your soul's highest truth, and understanding how emotions can indicate these to you.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × Do you ever allow your emotions to define your understanding of yourself? How do you do this? Why?
- × Which events have had lasting emotional impacts on you, and have defined the way you approach life emotionally?
- × Which parts of your emotionplace do you feel most in touch with? Which parts are most distant to you?

Ideas to reflect on: Letting-go lovingly; The duality of our being; Emotion as a link to the world of things; Emotion as an end result; Gratitude; Despair.

Happiness

Is happiness our greatest pursuit in life? Are we looking for that feeling, and once we have it, is it our job to maintain it? I have suggested that when you are in alignment with your passion-being, when you are in-tune, and when you are connected, that you are living in the real meaning of your life. But does this type of life necessarily lead to happiness?

No matter what type of life you are living, happiness is not always guaranteed. Living in meaning might even lead you to greater challenges, and lead you to face the things you have left unfinished, those things that reside below the surface that you thought you would never have to look at again. When life knows that you are ready to evolve, it will probably remind you that there is still something underneath which might be holding you back from higher levels. And these things might make you sad or sick or uncertain or fearful. New factors in life might force you to face some of your ingrained insecurities about deserving what you receive. This higher level might even raise many negative emotions and disappointments. But even though it does not lead to happiness, you can know that something has shifted and grown, and that you are understanding yourself in new ways because of the

challenging experience you have been through. So again, no, the pursuits of spiritual evolution and growth might not bring you happiness all the time.

If godliness and passion-being are joyful places to come from, then how does happiness not always go hand in hand with them? How can you be unhappy and godly at the same time? Godliness in our lives does not come in the form of a revelation, a finality or an end-point, but instead it is a never-ending process. Godliness is about reaching ever higher levels of commitment and connection. Sometimes, disappointment is a part of that process, and old scars being reopened is a part of that process. Your emotional reaction to those aspects of your growth can be unhappiness, but it does not mean that you are not living in your passion-being or godliness. In fact, it might mean you are on exactly the right path towards greater spiritual growth.

These challenges in your growth, often joined with strong emotions, can be seen as an integral part of processing where you are before you reach a new evolutionary level. They are dips into the depths of yourself. You have to look closely at what the new level means to you, and often you need to confront parts of yourself which are unsettled by this new growth. Sometimes these are painful experiences. They can be confusing and challenging to the extent that you cannot always resolve them immediately, and they might resurface at many points in your life until you can reach realignment. And then still you have not escaped that discord. It forms a part of your ingrained-self, a part of your history which lives with you. It might not be finished after the first encounter. You have not necessarily learned or mastered something, but you have started a process. Sometimes these experiences can disrupt your life and your experience of happiness for a while. But you get better at handling them over time. You are able to reach realignment quicker, and to jump to even higher levels every time you emerge from one of these challenges, although obviously this is not always the case. The process cannot be rushed. Sometimes you cannot stay in these

moments of realignment for as long you might want to because you have responsibilities, and in those moments the best you can do is to acknowledge your challenges. And when you move out of a particular challenge, you are not even necessarily moving into happiness. But you are moving to realignment, and back into an awareness of your commitment and connection which the challenge might have caused you to lose sight of. So while the spiritual path might not lead you to happiness all the time, it is leading you to digest those parts of your ingrained-self which hold you back from your spiritual evolution.

So how do you understand happiness? Happiness flows out of other things, like gratitude, service, purpose, and appreciating beauty, and these are things which you can do at any time. They are things which are in alignment with your passion-being, agency, strength, connection and godliness. Happiness also flows out of things which we cannot plan or practice whenever we like, like success at a goal, or validation from a loved one, or deepening romantic closeness. You could find happiness in a new job, a gift, or a new lover. The happiness flowing from these things is situated in that moment, and it is a beautiful experience when life surprises us with its wonders and beauties.

But life also surprises us with its disappointments. Things do not always go the way you want, at least on a smaller scale. You might get all of the big things you want in life, but there is still going to be someone who is unnecessarily mean or unfair to you, or you might encounter a change of circumstances or an event which shows you the difficulties, uncertainties and fears which life sometimes entails. The new job might not satisfy you. That new lover might end up blowing you off. Or you will react to a new situation in a way that does not reflect your godliness. How can you acknowledge the emotional reactions to each of these things? Should you dilute your happiness just in case things do not work out? Should you always be in defence-mode when situations seem potentially happy?

Some people have fearful reactions to the very idea of happiness. They seem to almost expect the disappointments which might come after happy moments. These expectations are often exaggerated to such a degree that they become debilitating, self-fulfilling prophecies, and a future-focused way of life, and in that way they could negate the possible joys of any situation. We all have expectations when facing new things. We all have ideals. But sometimes we become so wrapped up in how things do not fit our expectations, that we do not appreciate things for what they are. Sometimes our expectation of disappointment leads us to be disappointed no matter what the reality is.

You could also have more extreme reactions to the uncertainty of happiness: you might numb yourself to any emotion in order to avoid the possibility of sadness. You might find artificial types of happiness, or become attached to things that you can control in order to counter the lack of control over your emotions. So, you could think that as long as you are in a relationship, that you must be happy. Or you could imagine that having more possessions makes you happier. When you are simply running away from sadness with all your might, and even negating happiness which you fear might lead to future disappointment, you are not accepting the full range of your emotionplace. We are programmed, usefully so, to avoid things that do not feel good, but these things are not completely avoidable. For this reason, it is useful to understand and reflect on your emotions, and to re-evaluate your understanding of happiness and your relationship with it if you have barriers to the full emotional range.

We might take certain forms of happiness for granted. The good things in life become the norm; we only really start to have emotional awareness when our emotions are bad. We do not appreciate things until we lose them, and we do not appreciate our current state until it deteriorates, because happiness is not seen as emotionally relevant while it is happening. The pursuit of happiness and the lack of it seem to be more readily acknowledged

than the presence of happiness. Only certain types of happiness are registered as emotionally relevant, and usually these types of happiness fall into the second category discussed above: the type of happiness brought on by the surprises of life. The first type of happiness is often not acknowledged, such as those moments when our kids make us laugh, or we spend time with a friend, or we have a productive and satisfying day at work. These things are not seen as eventful or important. In a sense, we have happiness-blindness on, blocking out moments of contentment, humour, satisfaction and beauty, and considering them to be insignificant. This might be because we expect happiness to fit a certain mould which we have formed in our ingrained-self. It also has to do with the fact that people are frightened of expressing happiness, especially the seemingly insignificant kind of happiness. Appreciating your happiness seems to be regarded as a naive act, where you are not acknowledging that happiness might pass. But it is a part of finding joy in life to appreciate happiness in every form. You look at happiness as a part of your life, but not as the end goal in life. You acknowledge and appreciate every moment of happiness, but you do not cling to or rely on this emotional state.

Seeking only for happiness in life is similar to the results-driven way of living. You become attached to a certain emotional state. On a large scale, people have become so attached to the emotional state of happiness that they often pathologise the reactions of sadness to life's disappointments, and begin to see reactions of sadness as weakness. Reactions of sadness become shameful to people, and they start to become resentful of their own emotional states. The reasons for their sadness, unacknowledged, begin to fester. Acknowledging that sadness and happiness are both valid emotional reactions, that they are both useful, and that a reliance on either is not a firm foundation for your spiritwork, is a part of reaching for the fullness of your emotionplace. You are reaching for consciousness of your emotionplace when you do not shy away from expressing and experiencing any of your

emotional reactions, since these are all part of our individuality and humanity. The only distinction between happiness as a good emotion and sadness as a bad emotion is that often happiness is an indication of living in your passion-being, which is an important part of your spiritwork, and happiness often leads to a lightness of spirit which is less weight holding you back from your spiritwork. You will probably experience all of your emotional states again at some point in the future, so living next to them and appreciating what they are meant for is an act of loving your emotionplace.

Happiness, in every form, can be appreciated and acknowledged as a beautiful part of life. But happiness is not the end point of our spiritwork. In the same way that some people become addicted to sadness and the results which that emotional state brings them, some people can become addicted to happiness. They become so addicted to the pursuit of happiness and to what they think will bring them future happiness, that they fail to see the good and happy things in their present situations. Gaining new possessions and fulfilling certain goals will not guarantee eternal happiness. Finding the right partner will not guarantee your eternal happiness. Our emotionplace is not static.

The word happiness has become loaded with so many other things, such as joy and gratitude and appreciation of life. These things in themselves are more important than the emotional response to them. Being open to the emotional experience of happiness, and valuing every emotional reaction which you have, will guide you towards higher awareness of your emotionplace.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What makes you feel happiness in your life right now?
- × Do you hold any barriers to happiness based on expectations, or do you disregard certain forms of happiness as irrelevant?
- × What role does happiness play in your life? How do you find happiness in your life?

Ideas to reflect on: Happiness as an emotional reaction; Situational happiness; Joy; Gratitude; Fear of disappointment.



Fear

Fear finds expression in every part of our being. It can be a paralysing experience, and unsettle us on many levels. Indeed, love and fear have often been seen as oppositional, with fear being understood as a destructive and dangerous force which moves us further away from our love-nature. Yet the various levels of fear demonstrate that it is an important experience for our own spiritwork. It is often understood as existing solely on the emotional sphere, yet fear penetrates every aspect of our existence. We can become stuck in the experience of fear, and fail to see love. Many of us are even fearful of ourselves. Fear can be a debilitating and overwhelming factor in our lives, but it can also be a propeller, leading us towards discovering our deepest truth.

On the most basic level, we can experience physical fear. This form of fear is meant to keep us safe from harm, and to move us in the direction of safety and caution. Our bodies are designed to have automatic reactions when dangerous factors present themselves. These reactions manifest as physical fear, and try to steer us away from any dangerous factors in our surroundings. These factors usually threaten immediate physical harm, and your reaction is meant to get you out of the dangerous situation as quickly as possible.

Secondly, fear could also be understood as a state of mind. It can be seen as the opposite of openness and readiness. You become deeply invested

in the illusions of life, and see yourself as unable to transcend difficult situations. You look upon new challenges and new ways of thinking as potentially dangerous, and you refrain from engaging with these new ideas. When you let this type of fear define you, you close avenues to godliness and passion-being in your life. Your mindplace becomes stagnant within thoughts of fear and inadequacy. You forget your godly nature which exists around and beyond every moment of fear, and you block the possibility of openness and readiness for growth. This type of fear stems from the desire of your mindplace to remain constant, and any change is seen as dangerous to the maintenance of functional and familiar frames of mind. When we are confronted with newness, such as new political ideas, people of a different lifestyle, or drastic changes in our surroundings, the natural reaction of our mindplace is to be threatened. We are fearful that the stability, validity and maintenance of our individual and established frames of thought will be in danger, and we are resistant to these different frames of thought.

Fear also manifests in our emotionplace. It presents itself as anxiety, anger, confusion, indecision and frustration. These emotional reactions often stem from the act of fixation: we become frightened of losing our grip on the transient, illusory aspects of our surroundings. We are fearful that we will lose our power, and we become so invested in the illusion of our own limited nature that we forget our godliness. We choose to cling tightly to the things which we ultimately have no real power over, such as the perceptions and actions of others, the events of the future, or the things which have happened before. This relationship with the world leads us to be fearful of what it holds in store for us. This reaction is understandable when you consider that the world presents all of us with disappointments, rejections, difficulties, horrors and tragedies. We know that we cannot always get what we want, and when we do get a taste of something resembling what we desire, we hold on vehemently. But what motivates this clinging is a fear of loss. It is a fear of experiencing the hurt and disappointments which we have experienced

before. And inevitably, the harder we hold on, the more we feed this fear. We are giving power and energy to the source of our actions by ritually engaging in them. And out of this fear of loss stems the emotional burdens of holding on. When our relationship to the things in our lives is motivated by fear, those things will fuel negative emotions. When we hold on to people in our lives out of fear, those bonds will become strained by negative emotions. When we hold onto an illusory version of ourselves out of fear, trying to fool others or even ourselves, we will be plagued by negative emotions. So fear finds expression in the emotional field to the point where fear is often interpreted as an emotion.

Finally, fear also finds expression in our soulplace. It can be seen in how we run away from the uncertainties of life, and how we cut off our connection of love to those around us. Some philosophies view fear as the opposite of love. This is problematic, since love can have no opposite. Love is an absolute, the highest place our souls can go, and fear is simply forgetting that or resisting that transcendence. Love can exist within fear. Love can even inspire fear. When we encounter something as powerful and beautiful as love, we often again forget our connection to it, and cling to our individual incompleteness. We do not feel worthy of love, because we feel that we are somehow tainted or not ready for it. So fear is not the opposite of love, but it could often lead us to move away from awakening to our godly connection. Fear cannot undo love, since love is not undoable. But fear can lead us to resist love and godliness.

So how can the singular concept of fear encompass these different reactions from different spheres of our being? What exactly is fear if it can be so big?

In essence, fear is every instance where the duality of our existence is exposed to us, and where we invest in the part of ourselves which is limited, determined, temporal and incomplete, instead of the part which is godly and capable. We are confronted with a moment where we are reminded that we

have had difficulties before, that we have lost and been powerless before, and in that moment we forget our godliness. Fear is this moment of forgetting. It is the moment of investment in the world of things. And since we experience our reality in this lifetime largely through the world of things, fear is an inevitable part of it. It is impossible to live without fear. We are born into fear from those first tears when we discover the uncertainty of life, when we are left to interpret the insane mess of experiences we are confronted by, and we need to make some kind of sense of it. And that stays with us throughout our lives. We are still like children, not sure how to interact with other people, not sure how to think about ourselves, powerless to a lot of things around us and within us. This cardinal fear can either grow to overwhelm us throughout or lifetimes, or propel us towards magnificent things in life.

Fear can be very useful. Our investment in ourselves is a part of self-discovery and of awakening to experience and expression in every moment, even when this state is characterised by fear and uncertainty. When you move back to incomplete, back to understanding how you relate to different parts of your being in your own way, it is a scary place to be. You begin to discover things which your mindplace might resist, you take on challenges which your bodyplace is not used to, and you examine your emotionplace closely in a way which might call forth a flood of new levels of emotion. You embrace your own godliness in a way that might be frightening. So, self-discovery takes place in an arena of fear.

Fear is also a space where power is born. You can experience your godly, powerful nature in magnificent ways when you do it against the backdrop of fear. This is why often those who have accomplished much in their lifetimes and reached spiritual evolution have faced many difficulties in their pasts. They have taken fear and turned it into power. Since fear becomes a defining characteristic of our being, the only way to reach beyond fear is through courage. Courage is reaching for godliness despite physical constraints, and reaching for openness and readiness despite our ingrained

blocks. It is reaching for passion-being despite anxiety, and reaching for connection and love in every moment. The only way to experience courage is through fear. Fear is when we forget our godliness, and courage is when we look past fear and reach back towards godliness.

Courage is living your truth. The only way to live your truth is through honesty. Honesty is the opposite of fear. It is the moment of true awakening, when you can be honest with yourself and with others in a way which allows your godliness to shine. Often, our fear of ourselves leads us away from honesty. We fear ourselves because we imagine that the darkness we possess somehow disqualifies us from love. We fear ourselves because our ingrained-self has taught us that we are unworthy of love, power and godliness in our lives. Through our experience of loss, rejection and pain, we have decided that we are somehow the cause of this darkness. And we hide in dishonesty because we fear that if we expose any more of ourselves, we will cause even more of this darkness to ourselves and others. Courage and honesty is looking at our own ideas of our darkness, and finding love. It is reaching for the good and for evolution, even when we have felt pain. It is seeing ourselves, and every part of ourselves, as an expression of godliness in the world, and embracing that idea of darkness which is equally a part of our godly light, since even this is a part of our godly design.

In this way it is clear that fear is not a weakness, since it is a natural reaction to our reality, one we have from birth to the moment of death. But in every moment of fear there is an opportunity for courage.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × How are you holding on to fears in your life? What are these fears preventing you from experiencing or expressing?
- × What do you fear losing? How does your fear of loss interact with your state of cherishing these things?

Ideas to reflect on: Physical Fear; Fear holding us back from openness and readiness; Fear of loss; Fear as a resistance to love;



Soulplace

Your soulplace is that deepest part of your being. It is the deepest truth about you, because it is connected to love. Through your soulplace, your entire being is connected to love. You are tied to the infinity, power, freedom, godliness and joy that define love. Being connected to love necessarily means that you are connected to everything around you, since all of these things are similarly connected to love. It is the central web connecting you and everyone, and forming a collective, a unity, a singularity out of all of us. In this way, reaching back to your soulplace is an act of reaching to your connection with everything around you. When you can remember your soulplace in every moment, the most powerful form of love can work through you. The other parts of your being, from your bodyplace to your mindplace to your emotionplace, can be vessels of love.

Your connection to soulplace can absolutely become more powerful throughout your lifetime, but you can never live solely in your soulplace while you are in the world of things. That is because you are also always tied to your individual self, and you are an expression of individuality as well. This is the duality of your being: you are connected to everything and you are an expression of perfect love, but you are also an incomplete individual, thrust into a state of fear and uncertainty in the spatial and temporal realm. In our lives, we can lose our consciousness of our soulplace, or we can grow and develop our consciousness of it. We can tap into this highest love more

often and more powerfully, or we can forget it and become invested solely in our individualistic lives. This does not mean that our soulplace or our god-connection disappears. It simply means that we are focusing our existence away from it. We are seeking to cling to the illusions of life which we experience.

Is this necessarily a bad thing? Why do we need to be spiritual and conscious when we can have everything we want in life and hold on to these things? This, of course, is an individual decision, and you need to discover the balance between the pursuits of your soul and the pursuits of your determined self. You need to decide how much you want to invest in the benefits of being connected to love, and how much you want to invest in the world of things. There is no right and wrong in this regard. We all go through phases where we need to invest more in one part or the other. However, when we completely disregard the soulplace, we lose our awareness of that connection. That connection never disappears; it cannot disappear because it is a fundamental and integral part of our makeup. But we can fail to notice it, or we can actively push against it. When this happens, when we become overinvested in the world of things, we discover heightened levels of fear, we struggle to be open and ready for growth, and we might encounter emotional, mental and social problems as a result. We struggle to connect to the people around us because we forget their godliness. We struggle to love ourselves because we forget our godliness. So since you can never live only in your soulplace, and since overinvestment in the world of things can take you even further away from your highest truth, you need to discover a balance between these two spheres which works in your life and for your situation. This might be a difficult balance to strike.

You can, however, find a way to make the two spheres correspond, and this is through passion-being. Passion-being is a way of expressing your soulplace in the world, and it is a way of reminding yourself and those you come in contact with about your connection. This is the highest pursuit of

passion-being: demonstrating the connection of all things, and reaching higher levels of expressing and experiencing your own connection to all things. You become a vessel of godliness through your passion-being, where your spiritwork can take place and imprint this godliness onto your surroundings. So, essentially, passion-being is one form of mediation between the two aspects of your being. By tapping into your passion-being, you can find a way of living in your highest truth, which is love, power, freedom, connection and godliness, while investing in the world of things. You can express and experience at amazing levels by nurturing both aspects of your being.

When we can tap into our soulplace, we can experience our highest truth. Often, we do not know what we truly want because we are so heavily influenced by our ingrained-self or our state of fear. We think that our highest truth is to be with a specific partner, or to earn a specific amount of money, or to finish a particular project. The highest truth, the truth behind all of those markers, is that we are connected to godliness and to everything, and that we are expressions of love. You can rediscover this connection and this love when you rest in your soulplace. So when you feel that your life is defined by markers in the world of things, you are forgetting your god-nature behind that. These markers, however, offer us the chance to express and experience at higher levels. This is an important way to recognise when you are living outside of your spiritwork: when the things you define yourself by do not offer you new and dynamic levels of expression or experience. If you simply wish to earn more money for the sake of earning more money, you are investing in the world of things to the point where your spiritwork is disregarded. If you choose to stay in a stagnant and joyless relationship purely for the understanding that you are with someone, you are more invested in the marker than the actual experience. When projects become cancerous and draining and no longer uplifting for yourself or others, they

are no longer in alignment with your spiritwork, and some reassessment might be necessary.

It is important to remember that your soulplace is not higher on the hierarchy than other parts of your being. Your bodyplace, mindplace and emotionplace give you the tools to express and experience, and are all essential aspects of your existence in order to reach your highest truth. But your soulplace is where that meaning is shaped, where your passion-being flows from, and it is the only part of you which is permanent. It is the part of you untouched and unfrightened, the godly and powerful part. While it is true that you can experience and express these characteristics through other parts of your being, your soulplace is the place where these characteristics flow from. When you express power, joy, upliftment and connection through your bodyplace, mindplace and emotionplace, they are being fed by your soulplace. But they are the important instruments for the fulfilment of your spiritwork, which is why you have been placed within the world of things. You are here to be an expression of love, and to experience love. And the infinity of love is found in your soulplace.

Where does the soulplace get this ability to be infinite love? Your soulplace is the collective, instead of the individual. Love is another name for this connection. When you become conscious of your soulplace, you become conscious of all love. This is because your soulplace is connected to everything. It is the finality which always was and always will be. In this way it is a connection to God. The soulplace is unending since it encompasses all existence and is your connection to all existence. Since there always was and always will be existence, your soulplace always was and always will be. It is the source of your godliness. It causes you to have a connection to the godliness around you. It is, in this way, not situated within your being, but is surrounding and embracing your individual being. You cannot point to your soulplace in your body, because it is not simply a situated part, and is not determined spatially or temporally. So in essence,

tapping into your soulplace is tapping into the infinity which you are a part of.

This talk might, to some, sound counterintuitive or unscientific. It might inspire jeers since it all just sounds too wishy-washy, too hocus-pocus, and too New Age. This idea of a limitless soulplace which connects with godliness and with everyone and everything might be too much to accept, and cannot be proven beyond a doubt. We can see and touch and measure all of the other parts of our being, but the soulplace is elusive and mystical and, frankly, uncomfortable for many people to even talk about. So, is the soulplace just a figment of the imagination? Is there a chance that it does not exist at all, but just comforts a few of us who desperately need something to believe in beyond what we experience in the world of things? Perhaps. Maybe it is simply a concept to explain certain principles and occurrences in a unifying manner. But the concept of a soulplace has formed or inspired many extremely effective religious and spiritual ways of life, and has given rise to a sense of meaning and purpose to many. It is a useful concept, and the truth, the tangibility, lies in the fact that it resonates so strongly with so many people and empowers them in their lives. It can be thought of as a mental framework, something that reminds you to treat your surroundings with respect since you are, in many ways, connected to everything outside of your personal bodyplace, mindplace and emotionplace. Your soulplace, as a concept, seeks to inspire love and unity and mutual upliftment. So I am saying, even if you do not believe in the existence of your soulplace, it is a powerful metaphor for the experience of loving and respecting the world around you.

So, how do you tap into the elusive soulplace? Why is it sometimes so difficult to tap into, and why does it feel like a deviation from normality? The answer lies in the fact that we become heavily invested in the illusions of life. While I argue that there is merit in moving back to incompleteness and in understanding our determined nature, we become stuck in the idea that there

is nothing complete, or all-powerful, or enduring. We become focused on the spatial and temporal us, instead of the transcendent us. We let our emotionplace define us, and are invested in the idea of sadness and restlessness, or are on a tireless quest for the pleasures of the world of things at the cost of resting in our soulplace. All of these factors could lead us to forget our god-nature and our connection to all things. We begin to lose that source of power and beauty and godliness, and we see ourselves only as incomplete, incapable and limited.

Moving into our soulplace is again found in the act of awakening. It is seeing ourselves in the here and now. It is being conscious of what is going on inside of us and around us. It is choosing for gratitude instead of despair. It is choosing those practices from which happiness flows. Moving into our soulplace is letting godliness flow through us, and finding a way to hear and see and feel that godliness flow. It is reaching for openness and readiness for new growth.

And all of these things come from a change of focus. Feel your energy flow into the direction of your soulplace. Remember your god-nature by actively reminding yourself. Listen with your whole heart to your deepest truth. You can find this through whichever form of meditation works for you.

Meditation

There are essentially two different forms of meditation: thought-fuelled meditation and non-thought meditation. I find both forms equally rewarding in helping me to focus on my soulplace. What is important to remember is that meditation does not have to be complicated or follow a particular formula, and we do not have to feel pressured to put aside time to meditate. We can work meditation into our lives no matter what our situation.

- × Thought-fuelled meditation involves recitations, affirmations, or visualisations. You could practice recording some audio affirmations and playing them for yourself, or reading some uplifting writing which you have worked out beforehand. Practice some thought-fuelled meditation for a few minutes, preferably every day, but if you cannot manage that then find some kind of ritual which works for you – perhaps every time you are in the shower you remind yourself that you are godly, beautiful, powerful and capable. Or while you are driving, you listen to uplifting songs with messages and melodies which resonate with your deepest truth. Thought-fuelled meditation also involves reflection in your journal and placing visual cues in your surroundings, so if you have taken benefit from this so far, try to write about your soulplace and remember your connection. Write about how you practice expression and experience of passion-being in your daily life. You could also practice visualising yourself living in new levels of your passion-being, placing yourself in a relaxing space, and feeling the feelings which come with that new level. In this way you are bringing your mindplace, bodyplace and emotionplace into the space of higher levels of passion-being, and you allow yourself to be open and ready for these levels to materialise. Or, you could think about things that bring you joy in life and things that you are

grateful for. All of these are great practices to move back into your soulplace, but not all of them will work for all people. Experiment with a few of them and see what works for you.

- × Non-thought meditation is the act of clearing the clutter in your mindplace so that you can find space for godliness. Non-thought meditation often involves focusing on your breathing and allowing thoughts to lightly drift in and out of your consciousness without letting them become your focus. The practice helps you just to be in the here and now, and to appreciate the godliness that is already around you all the time. You can experience the peace, relaxation, and understanding that flow from your soulplace. It is important not to fight away thoughts when you are practicing non-thought meditation. Try to acknowledge them and just let them flow through your mind. The key here is to come back to a sense of awakening in the present moment, to be aware of your body and mind and emotions right now, and not to become stuck in fears, desires, or investments in the world of things. You could practice this by sitting in a comfortable chair in a well-lit, quiet room, without too many distractions around. If necessary, you might need to find a place like this if one is not available in your home: sitting in your car, in a nearby park, or even in a quiet corner at work. Try and find a place where you will not be disturbed, and where you can just be with yourself for a while. Then take some deep, slow breaths and keep your attention focused on this repetitive action. Some people choose to chant while they do non-thought meditation as this helps them to keep unwanted thoughts out of their focus. Do what works for you. Practice doing only a few minutes at a time, even one or two if you do not have enough time.

Ideas to reflect on: Connection; Your highest truth; Overinvestment in the world of things; Thought-fuelled and non-thought meditation.

Responsibility and Commitment

In a lot of ways, responsibility and commitment seem to be oppositional to resting in your soulplace. They entail a strong investment in the world of things, to the point where you give up certain freedoms. You might choose to sacrifice your own comfort, time or space in order to satisfy your commitments and responsibilities. Your projects, career, relationships, family, and your commitment to service might become major drivers in your life.

There is immense beauty in the act of commitment. There is courage and love in the power of taking responsibility in life. Responsibility and commitment are not simply found in your actions, but become a mode of being which can lead you to higher levels of expression and experience. They can lead you to find your power through making tangible changes in the world around you, to find your joy in taking your career to new heights, to find beauty when you carry a project through to completion and can see the finished product, and to find higher levels of love when you commit to strengthening a relationship and experiencing new levels of connection with another person. You do not have to sacrifice your soulplace to live in commitment and to take responsibility. In fact, responsibility and

commitment can serve as a way to infuse godliness into the things you encounter. You can make your deep connection with the world of things a truly godly engagement, especially when your commitments are in alignment with your passion-being. When you can see a responsibility as a way of uplifting and empowering others and yourself, you are able to find the godliness within that moment. When you can make a commitment to something or someone, you are acknowledging your power in determining your surroundings and having a positive influence on something external to yourself.

By taking responsibility for something, you are claiming your connection to that thing. You are acknowledging a bond, and are investing in the upliftment of whatever you are taking responsibility for. It is a way of noticing and living in the mutual link of power which you have with the object of your responsibility: you demonstrate your power through feeding the development and sustenance of your responsibility, but this responsibility also has power over you. It influences your spheres of experience and expression, and requires your time and energy.

There are different forms of responsibilities which we undertake in life. Some of them we choose, and we can choose to stop being responsible for them whenever we like. Some of them we can never stop being responsible for. Others are not chosen. We find ourselves in a state of constantly having to balance commitments and responsibilities in various aspects of our lives. Are we meant to hold on to all of these? How responsible are we personally for larger social and political happenings, like war or poverty or global warming? And if we are overwhelmed with our commitments, when do we know when it is time to let go of our grip on these? And when are we ready to increase our level of commitment to certain aspects of our lives?

On the most basic level, we are thrust into an unending state of responsibility in our lives. Without our choosing, we have been designed to live as examples of humanity to one another. We show each other that people

are either good or bad, loving or hateful, uplifting or destructive. This is a responsibility which we cannot escape, even when we try to live in isolation. In that case, we are simply showing others that people can be isolated, and lifelong isolation is another way of turning away from your connection to everyone and everything. What people see in the world, they also see in themselves. We begin to imagine that we could also reach that level of power and godliness, or hatred and destruction that we see in other people. That is why a young child from a poor community will have a higher chance of transcending difficulties when they can see role-models who come from their community and have done well. It is simply the example that human-beings can reach those levels, and what we see we start to accept as truths. This is not the end-point of our possibilities though, as the power of creativity and imagination might help us to overcome examples of hateful and stifling humanity which we might encounter. But to a large extent, we all have power over what other people think of other people. When you say something hurtful to someone, they could have the thought, 'People can be mean,' and this thought will translate into the way they understand all people.

This principle translates into a responsibility to provide the example of humanity to others which you would like to know as the truth of humanity. In essence, being the change you want to see. Because the state of humanity in the world right now is simply the way that all of us act, think and feel. We are making that truth in every moment. So when we can provide examples of humanity that are godly, powerful, beautiful, loving and connected, that example will become the state of humanity at that moment for those we encounter.

Our actions also have consequences which go beyond the immediate and visible effects. When we think out of love and connection, we begin to think about these consequences. We begin to know that what we see is simply the result of past actions, and by changing our own actions we can see new things. By acting out of a place of godliness, we can see godliness in our

surroundings. And since godliness is our true nature, we have a responsibility to express and experience this in our surroundings.

So a part of our innate responsibility is to uplift our surroundings, both the people we encounter or have influence over, and the physical space we find ourselves in. When you uplift your surroundings, you immediately uplift yourself as well. You feed the collective part of yourself, your deepest, truest self: your soulplace.

So why do so many people ignore this responsibility? Is it really all of our responsibility if we have a choice to act in opposition to it?

In essence, ignoring this responsibility is also a way of demonstrating a distortion of power over your surroundings. We have the power to show any face of humanity that we choose to. And often we show the face that we have seen the most so far. To uplift our surroundings and to demonstrate the godliness of humanity is the responsibility of all of us because all of us are part of the godly singularity, and all of us are innately here to express and experience beauty, love, power and connection. But we can absolutely forget this part of our being, and we can act without thinking out of love, or act out of our ingrained-self, or act based on the pursuit only of what we desire from the world of things. We imagine that the power of destruction still demonstrates a deeper form of power, even though this power ultimately will not lead us to our godly nature. This act of denying our responsibility to humanity and our surroundings is actually working counter to the full expression of our godliness, because we fail to bring about godliness in our own lives and the lives of others. Humanity can evolve to reach higher levels of love and godliness when we commit to our responsibility to our surroundings.

To a large degree, we can choose our responsibilities in life. We can decide where we want to invest our energies and what we want to bring forth in the world. But sometimes our responsibilities can become too much for us. We might feel personally responsible for things which are, on the grander

scale, out of our control. We might sacrifice our own passion-being or godliness in pursuing these responsibilities, and try single-handedly to bring about large-scale change. But how do you know when a responsibility is not yours to carry?

While it is true that we have immense power in affecting our surroundings, we are not personally responsible for changing other people. We can provide them opportunities for their upliftment, and give of ourselves to causes, but we cannot directly alter the bodyplace, mindplace, emotionplace or soulplace of someone else in our godly nature, and it is not our responsibility to do this. This is because lasting and effective change can only come from within, and never comes from outside. You could give someone a lot of money, but if they are not in the place to receive that gift, it would probably not resonate with them and they would lose the money soon after receiving it. You could teach someone about tolerance and acceptance, but if they have not seen those traits demonstrated in their own surroundings, this lesson will probably not resonate with them and they will struggle to be tolerant and accepting of others. Your responsibility ends at providing the tools and structures for others to determine their own upliftment. Your responsibility is to create networks of people working towards the same goals, goals which reach towards godliness. But it is not your responsibility to force people to work towards your goals. Being committed to a cause does not mean forcing others to be committed to your cause. It does not mean that you are inherently and unequivocally right, and others who disagree with you are fundamentally wrong. The ultimate goal of upliftment is that each person should be able to express themselves and experience life however they choose, as long as this does not impede on the freedom of others to do the same. When you see this aspect falling apart in your society, it is not your responsibility to force personal change on those who are perpetrating the loss of freedom, but it is your responsibility to work towards upliftment and to bring about social change. This can be done by building networks and

engaging in dialogue and education, but sometimes it might be necessary to stand up for upliftment and demand it when these methods do not work. Dialogue can break down from both sides, and many times it is our responsibility to stand up for the dignity of those who are disregarded in a society. Essentially, your responsibility is to make sure that your own expression and experience, and the expression and experience of others, are not stifled.

On a personal level, our responsibilities can also lead us to godliness. When you care for a child, you experience the pressures of responsibility and the joys which it can bring. You know that this can be an extremely difficult commitment, where often you will have to give a lot of yourself in order to nurture the development of the child. You will make many mistakes, and you will often forget the godliness of your commitment. But inside of that there are opportunities for immense beauty, joy and fulfilment. Being responsible for another person is one of the ways you can experience the amazing connection which is your soulplace. You are seeing yourself in someone else. You are listening and exploring and learning about humanity in a powerful way. While this responsibility challenges you in ways you could never imagine, it also gives your life meaning and purpose, and it gives you the opportunity to experience your godly connection through this person.

Commitment is a way of demonstrating our connection to everyone and everything. We are choosing the places where we want to imprint a part of ourselves into our surroundings most clearly. And we are choosing opportunities to witness and demonstrate the godliness which defines us.

Why do commitments and responsibilities often inspire fear, and why are they sometimes so difficult to stick to? Often, our own power frightens us. When we know that the success of something depends on us to some degree, we know that it is possible that it will also fail. We know that we could end up hurting those who we are committed to, and many times we do hurt those closest to us. The enormity of responsibilities, and the realisation

that we have the power to achieve great things or cause great harm, make us fearful of entering into commitments.

We might also feel like commitments could stifle our freedom. Giving yourself to something also means that it has great power over you, and we could be frightened that we will lose a part of who we are because of the demands of our commitments.

In this way it is important to evaluate our fears of commitments, and to think about how those fears might be either holding us back, or warning us about potential problem areas within that commitment. We need to remind ourselves about why we are making that commitment, and of the opportunities for expression and experience which that commitment might hold, and then evaluate whether or not to undertake it.

Finding a way to see your responsibility to yourself, and committing to your own spiritual growth, is also an important part of developing spiritually. Committing to yourself and to your own growth is a way of maintaining your focus on spiritwork.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × Which responsibilities and commitments are important to you in your life? How do you find passion-being through these spheres?
- × Do you hold any fears about certain responsibilities or commitments in your life? How do these fears impact you?

Ideas to reflect on: Creating the state of humanity in every action, thought and feeling; Thinking out of love;



Recap of Part I

The main question which Part I seeks to address is ‘Who am I?’ The chapters deal with the different parts of your being, namely the bodyplace, mindplace, emotionplace and soulplace, and they attempt to discuss the most prominent issues within each of these spheres: What is the nature of being here and now? How can you shift your frame of mind about life? What is happiness and fear? What is your connection to the world around you?

Of course, your being is not actually conveniently divided into these parts, and you cannot isolate your growth to each sphere. You are a whole, an individual, with an identity which encapsulates all of these parts. Once you have thought about each of these parts, it is useful to think of yourself in your entirety: What is your identity? How do you impact on the world every day? Often, we cannot articulate this with clarity, but Part I aims at providing the tools so that you can begin to answer these questions.

This first part is meant to plunge you deep into self-understanding. You deal with all of those intimate and personal questions which you might have been avoiding, and you start to confront yourself through a lens of godliness and love. But it is also an extremely challenging process to begin, and the questions in Parts II and III do not become easier. What is important is to take it at your own pace, and digest every new morsel of your own self-understanding until you feel ready for more. These questions are meant to illuminate the things you might not be awake to, and in that way bring about enlightenment.

What is very important to remember is that this is not the final word on your self-understanding. If Part I seeks to do anything, it would be to show

that getting to know yourself is a lifelong process. You have probably encountered many of these thoughts and questions before, but Part I asks you to do a lot of work in actually reaching your own answers. Many of the philosophical or spiritual ideas shared might be familiar to you, but Part I aims to make them practical in your everyday life, and to remove some of the mystery of spirituality by taking an approach which is focused on what works for you.

The first three chapters introduce the basics of what Back to Incomplete is about. You might be living outside of yourself in many ways, and awakening is your way of reaching back to yourself within this present moment. Awakening is getting to know your true nature and living in that truth. Your true nature is love, but you are often affected by your ingrained-self, a part of you that is shaped by your experiences in the world of things. Often this ingrained-self is plagued with fears and insecurities, which might become subconscious motivations for actions which are not in alignment with your true nature. The most powerful way of expressing and experiencing the world is through living in your passion-being, which is when you translate your true nature of power, beauty, joy, freedom and connection into actions, thoughts, feelings and words. Discovering the actions and situations which lead you to passion-being is a major part of your spiritwork.

These three chapters are the ones I recommend you go back to often, re-reading your responses to the meditations. See if anything has changed by the end of Part I, and then check again at the end of Parts II and III. These questions are about forming that initial understanding of who you are, and it is always amazing to me how insightful, accurate and profound the initial responses can be. The reason is that, without even needing any more information, we already have an amazing understanding of our true nature. We are already connected to our soulplace, and we have amassed so much knowledge simply through experiencing the world. This book simply aims to

nurture that understanding and connection, and to facilitate further exploration into those truths.

Part I goes on to discuss the four parts of your being, and how they affect your self-understanding. Your bodyplace is a physical tool for the expression of your passion-being, and it is a manifestation of your internalities, especially your soulplace. Your bodyplace is located in time and space, and has a dynamic relationship to these two factors. You find yourself relating to different spaces in different ways, and have the power to shape the space you find yourself in. You also have a relationship to the past and the future, and to the understanding of your own death.

Your mindplace is the processing centre of your being, and is also the place where creativity and thoughts are formed. An important aspect of your mindplace is that it seeks to maintain existing structures, and resists change. Part of your spiritwork is discerning which external factors could lead to your own spiritual growth, and entering a space of openness and readiness in relation to these. Openness and readiness is the state of already being in the field of experience of the factors in alignment with your passion-being, so that your mindplace can adapt to these factors and accept them as a part of your experience and expression.

Your emotionplace is the sphere which serves as an indicator for what is happening in all other spheres. It lets you know if you are in alignment with your passion-being, and also allows you the full breadth of experience in the world of things as your emotions arise. Happiness is one of the reactions within your emotionplace, which often arises when you are living in alignment with your passion-being, even though living in your passion-being is not always tied to happiness. Fear also inspires many emotional reactions. Fear is when you forget your godly connection and see yourself as only that part which feels incapable of dealing with life. This is often linked to anxiety, frustration and anger.

Your soulplace is your direct connection to your highest truth: love. It is the aspect of your being which binds you to all other people and things. But your soulplace also serves to inform your passion-being and to mould your existence in the world of things: your soulplace has decided which characteristics you were born with, and has given you the opportunity for certain fields of experience within your life. You can negotiate your own life in relation to these aspects of your soulplace.

The final chapter of Part I begins to shift the focus into the territory of Part II: Once you have formed a self-understanding, how do you relate to the world? The duality of your nature, as both a spiritual and a worldly being, is discussed in terms of responsibility and commitment. Your innate human responsibility is to be an example of godliness in the world.

Part I often speaks about the illusions of life, which refers to the world of things. This is not meant to place the world of things at a lower level than your soulplace, but it is meant to show that what is real, what persists, and what is the deepest truth, is your soulplace. Everything else is simply a means of offering you the opportunity to express and experience yourself as fully as possible, and to do this you need the world of things.

In Part II, the conversation turns from the insular to the external. Thoughts will be directed towards practical application of the principles from Part I to aspects of your everyday life. So: how do you, in your entirety, relate to work? How do you find openness and readiness in the field of romance? How can you reach for godliness in your relationship with money? Part II will also deal with the difficulties which we all face in our relation to the world: What happens when we become stagnant? How do we deal with tragedy? What is the nature of addiction? And how do we understand anger? The aim of this part is to form a strategy for understanding and dealing with the world, and finding your own place in it. These different parts can each individually serve to derail you from your spiritual growth, and through

exploring each one you can develop your own way to think of them through the lens of love.

An important concept which Part II deals with is the idea of dignity, both in attaining and valuing your own sense of dignity, and in respecting the dignity of others. The idea of upliftment also takes prominence, and the true nature of love is discussed. Part II will also begin the discussion on meaning and making life meaningful, an idea which is dealt with fully in Part III.

Things to think about before Part II

You might want to solidify the understandings you have reached throughout Part I before moving on to Part II. These questions might help you to do this:

- × What has been the most resonant idea or the most profound understanding which you have discovered through the meditations in Part I?
- × What has been the most challenging aspect of working through Part I?
- × Try to answer this question as fully as you can now: Who are you?
- × Are there any particular questions which you hope Part II might help you to address?

A monochromatic red-toned landscape photograph. The scene depicts a valley with a small house in the foreground, a large tree on the left, and mountains in the background. The text 'Part Two' and 'The World' is overlaid in white serif font.

Part Two
The World

Treading Lightly

What does it mean to interact with people, and is it okay to treat different people differently or to come from different places in your being depending on the nature of the interaction? When you come from a place of gentleness and respect for the humanity of everyone involved in an exchange, you are acting out of a place which recognises the godliness of every person. When you act out of love, you are in tune with the love-connection which defines us all. So, how do you go about being gentle with people?

A big part of our interactions with others, be they strangers or people we spend every day with, is being a witness to their lives and being a source of validation for their humanity. An aspect of what you are saying when you even greet someone is, 'I see you, you are there, you are real and substantial and not nothing'. Everyone needs to know this about themselves and have it affirmed by other people, since other people constitute one of our greatest mirrors to godliness.

Of course, this is not easy to remember all the time. Sometimes acknowledging someone also means acknowledging the negative things that they mean to you. Actually looking at a person living on the street when they

approach you means acknowledging that you live in a society where things like poverty and homelessness exist. Acknowledging the person you always squabble with in your office means that you might be giving the anger in your relationship more power. Writing that card to your mother means that you are confronted with memories of the way her disappointments made you feel, and you make yourself vulnerable to your own judgements of her parenting. Bumping into your ex-partner might awaken memories of the painful breakup or the betrayals.

All relationships are littered with these ingrained ideas, even if it is just through prejudices which you hold against what the stranger represents to you, or if it is the complicated history of your long-term relationships. Interactions with some people are easier than with others, mostly when these relationships are based on very superficial exchanges, or when you already feel rested in the mutual respect and validation which the relationship entails.

You are not only saying something about the other person in an interaction, but you are also feeding certain parts of yourself through the way you treat people. These are different parts depending on the nature of your interaction. Being conscious of this fact can lead to more meaningful interactions. So, disregarding the humanity and existence of someone else makes you more distant to the concept of humanity in your own mind, and makes you more distant to your own humanity as well. You become separate from the love and acceptance which you might want to foster when you teach yourself that people are not worthy of respect. Interactions cannot be isolated and do not only have limited effects. When you affirm the right to dignity of one person, you are affirming your own right to dignity and that of every person you will ever interact with. When you disrespect the humanity of a single person, you disrespect your own humanity and that of everyone you will ever interact with. This is because your very idea of humanity becomes tied up in this interaction. You tell yourself that it is okay to treat a person in

a particular way, and that a person might deserve disrespect. And that makes it easier the next time you want to disrespect yourself or a loved one.

Of course, it is challenging to be gentle with everyone you encounter. How do you come from a place of gentleness and regard when your relationship with someone has become defined by resentment? How do you come from gentleness when the very act of gentleness itself might cause frustration, suspicion and resentment in the person you are addressing, and when they accuse you of being insincere? How do you come from gentleness when the interaction is toxic and when the other person only wants to use the interaction for their own ends? What if the person disregards your humanity and does not respect your dignity when they address you? Are you then justified in treating them the same way?

Essentially, gentleness is respecting someone else's humanity. It is treading lightly, and understanding that interactions involve more than simply your interpretation but also that of someone else. A big part of gentleness is realising when you have started to disrespect another person, and being able to acknowledge that even just in their understanding, you have overstepped certain boundaries. And then, gentleness involves taking your new understanding into consideration in future interactions with that person. This might seem like feeding the ego of someone else, because you might often find the things people are offended by to be nonsensical in your understanding of the world. Being able to acknowledge that the person has a right to react the way they did is the first step in gentleness. Even if you think they have overreacted, you can still address them out of respect for the way that they perceive the situation. We all have different ways of interpreting situations. Sometimes you might feel that someone has wronged you, but they could have no idea about it and not have had the intention to disrespect you. So gentleness is remembering that we are all interpreting situations differently, and that we can be hurt and disrespected in many different ways.

Does gentleness mean being a pushover? Does it mean being powerless in relationships and allowing yourself to be constantly abused by someone? Gentleness does involve humility, compromise and the understanding that sometimes your ego might be feeding your responses. But this does not mean that you should accept disrespect from someone else. Gentleness has to go both ways in order to work. If someone is constantly degrading you, they are not respecting your humanity. And while you can still approach this without resorting to retaliatory disrespect, staying close to this person might have destructive consequences. Firstly, you are teaching the other person that the humanity of someone else, in this case your own humanity, is not important and does not need to be respected. You are allowing them to diminish their own ideas of humanity. Also, you are doing exactly the same thing to yourself by saying that you do not deserve the same gentleness that other people do. Only if your idea is that everyone deserves it, does it make any kind of sense as an understanding of how people should treat each other. Only once your frame of mind is that all people deserve respect, will you be able to find gentleness in your interactions.

What about people who are constantly destructive or disrespectful? What about criminals or people who are defined by their hatefulness? Do they deserve gentleness as well? They deserve a validation of their humanity, but they do not deserve to be allowed to continue their destructive behaviour. If you allow them to stay in a position where they disrespect the humanity of others, you start to break down your idea of humanity. If you treat them like monsters or as less than human, and disregard gentleness in your own reaction, you start to break down your idea of humanity. If you make them invisible or alien to you, you start to break down your idea of humanity.

So respect and dignity need to be mutually honoured in order for gentleness to exist. When you let someone else push you around and you do not stand up for yourself, and when you are not firm and direct in claiming your right to be treated with respect and dignity, you are teaching yourself,

the person disrespecting you, and those who witness the interaction that your humanity is not worth standing up for. And this idea then begins to extend to a wider view of all humanity. Disrespect could range from being bullied by someone, to a social system that tells you that you are a second-class human being. Self-preservation often kicks in when we are disrespected: we fear that the physical danger of standing up for our humanity outweighs the lessons we are reiterating through non-action. It is important to remember that when a reaction of resigning to disrespect is maintained and allowed to become definitive, it has devastating effects on humanity. That is why reconciliation is often so difficult in places which were previously or which are currently divided along racial, ethnic, religious or other lines: it manifests in a deep-seated guilt in certain members of society for inflicting disrespect on others, as well as the guilt on the part of those who were fearful to stand up to the system. The diminished idea of humanity which has infected that culture has been given such deep roots through its continuation, and it might take people a very long time to realise that the perpetrators of disrespect and those who were disrespected are both worthy of humanity again.

For the most part, disrespect of humanity involves more than simply the perpetrators of disrespect. When systems of disrespect are maintained and allowed to fester, for example when a society allows violent crime to escalate without drastic action, large-scale public debate and widespread involvement on the issue, it starts to be everyone's fault. A degradation of the concept of humanity feeds into future disrespectful acts, and these acts feed into degrading our idea of humanity even further. When you realise that you are speaking not only about the person you interact with, but also about your understanding of yourself and all people in that moment, you are on the path to gentleness. You are teaching yourself how to treat people, but also teaching people how to treat you.

Gentleness is possible only when you remember to come from a place of acknowledging the humanity of everyone you encounter, with their unique

history and psychological state, and aim for kindness and treading lightly. Many times we get it wrong. So the next step in gentleness is apologising, and making ourselves vulnerable to the fact that we do not always come from our highest love. Apology has great reconciliatory value, since it is admitting that you have disrespected someone else in ways you cannot even fully understand, and that you commit yourself to be sensitive to this new level of understanding in future.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × When is it easy for you to remember your gentleness?
- × What types of interactions make it difficult for you to remember to be gentle?
- × How are your prejudices and ingrained fears and anger affecting your ability to be gentle?

Ideas to reflect on: Feeding your idea of humanity; Interpreting situations differently; Dignity; Apology.



Service

Service is the act of reaching for the upliftment of yourself and others. You are committing to bringing godliness into your surroundings, and reflecting godliness to those who you encounter. Upliftment has three objectives which all form a part of any acts of service: to remind people of their godly nature, to provide them with tools to determine their own lives, and to allow them to live in dignity. When you practice service in alignment with these three objectives, you can uplift your surroundings to higher levels of light and love.

The great misconception is that service is an act of giving. This definition is inadequate in describing the core of service. Instead of being an act of giving something to others, service is your own way of expressing and experiencing your godliness through the world of things. That is why people often say that they get so much from service. They are experiencing awakening to the godliness which is present in even the most difficult situations. When you engage in service, you are spreading beauty, power, joy, freedom and love into your surroundings. You are acting as an example of godliness to those who you encounter. And you are proving to yourself

that the face of humanity can be resilient, transcendent and powerful even with seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Service is about having a commitment to the world. You are investing in acts which bring godliness to your surroundings, and which can uplift the situations of others. In this way, you are remembering your connection to all things, since your works of service demonstrate the presence of the highest love in yourself and those you encounter. You also experience the growth of yourself and others through this upliftment as you reach higher levels of understanding about your own power and connection. When you act in service, you begin to remember that you have more than enough to share, because you are infinity. The higher your level of service in life, the higher you can experience your ability to be powerful and to bring about beauty and fulfilment in your surroundings. This is why it is true that the more you give out of love, the more you will have. This is because you are starting to see yourself as unlimited, and you are starting to realise that you are bigger than your personal assets or your personal time and space, since you can impact on others in ways which surpass these constraints. And with this shift in your mindplace, these physical aspects will begin to shift in your life. When you come to service out of love, you will find that this love continuously expands and feeds itself. You enter a new field of experience which allows you to have openness and readiness for higher levels of your own godliness to manifest. When you find new and creative ways to engage in service, you can experience the gifts of commitment and the fulfilment of your spiritwork. So, as you engage in service, you engage in a powerful aspect of your spiritwork which will lead to your own personal development, as well as strengthening your awareness of your connection to everything and everyone.

An important factor of service is that it is not a way to change other people. You can have an impact on someone else, but change is always the decision of the individual. No matter how much you act in trying to shift the

bodyplace, mindplace or emotionplace of others, if they do not decide to shift these aspects themselves, it will never happen. What you can do is be an example of godliness in their life, provide tools for them to reach their own godliness, or express godliness in your surroundings. You are having an impact whether you realise it or not, because your acts of godliness will spark their awakening in subtle ways. You can show them love and connection, but it is not your responsibility to change them. So, once you have acted in service, those who are impacted can decide to ignore what you have done, and this is their choice. When you try to force them to act, think or feel in a particular way, you are not demonstrating the highest truth. This is because a part of that highest truth is freedom and power, and if you are robbing someone of these aspects you are not acting in service.

In this way service can often go wrong: when you try to provide a form of service to people that they do not want and that they have not chosen, or when you try to force people to change through your actions. Often, even though you have good intentions in this case, you will be met with so much resistance from those you encounter that your project will probably not reach much success. You could also be disrespecting those who you try to impose your form of service on, and in this way you have eroded the dignity of those involved, even if the tangible goals of your service are met.

This does not mean that you should run away from things which you know are in alignment with godliness simply because there is resistance to them. The key is that service should be a form of dialogue, and one which respects the dignity of all parties involved, both those providing the service and those who are meant to benefit from it. When this dialogue is lost, the service will not truly be serving the objectives of upliftment, since it will not tap into the aspect of connection which is a part of godliness. And only through dialogue can you experience the fullness of your godliness and the godliness of those you encounter, since another aspect of that godliness is the sharing of joy, love and power.

What shape should service take in all of our individual lives? Service can take whichever shape you choose which is in alignment with the three objectives of upliftment. Find your own way to bring upliftment to the places where it is necessary. The most powerful form of service, of course, is when it is in alignment with your passion-being. This is because you will already infuse godliness into that action, which also then aims to spread godliness. And if you can find a way to incorporate service into your current work, you automatically make your work meaningful and can find godliness in it. This is not always an easy thing to do, but even if your means of service is simply to be an example of a kind, loving person to everyone you encounter, or to spread beauty in everything you do, you are on a path of godliness.

Service which is directed at upliftment is the innate responsibility of everyone. But what is the right amount of service to be practicing? And what if you have very little yourself, or you are going through your own physical, mental and emotional difficulties? Are you allowed to not act in service in these cases? These cases do not negate the responsibility of service, but they might call for you to uplift yourself before you can effectively uplift anyone else. If you are not coming out of a place of love in your service, you are probably not serving anyone. The right amount of service to be practicing is the amount which you are individually able to at your current level, and a good measure of this would be that you still are in alignment with passion-being in whichever form of service you undertake. When you start to feel overextended and feel that you might be living outside of yourself for long periods of time due to your service, it might be time to re-evaluate your level of service.

Aim for a level of service that makes you feel connected to those around you. Taking very small steps at first will be much better than committing to a form of service that leads you to live outside of yourself and to not feel connected. Move into the space of service that allows you to remember your godliness and the godliness of everything around you.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × Which forms of service are you already practicing? Which types of service can you incorporate into your everyday life right now?
- × How do you feel about the service which you currently practice? Are you infusing love into these activities?
- × What types of fears or hesitations do you have with regard to service?
- × What are your hopes for service in your own life? Where would you like to practice service more effectively?

Ideas to reflect on: Disrespecting the dignity of those who you serve; Upliftment; Having an impact; Commitment to the world; Changing someone else.



Work

Your work is what you spend much of your time and energy on. It is, for most people, a way to earn money, and very often the motivation for working does not go much further than that. It could also incorporate your service to those around you, providing a space where you can make a meaningful contribution to the lives of others. Your work in the world of things is that profession or trade which you undertake. For some of us this stays more or less constant throughout our lives up until retirement, but sometimes we can engage with many different types of work in our lifetimes.

In many ways, our work comes to define us. When we introduce ourselves to someone new, we say ‘I am a dentist’ or ‘I am a social worker’. This ‘I am’ seems to be almost comprehensive. We can make judgements about others based solely on this information, where our prejudices about a certain profession make us respond to them in a certain way. For instance, we might have very different reactions to someone who says ‘I am a lawyer’ than we will have to someone who says ‘I am an actor’. We might value one profession more than another in a particular society, and in that way we afford the work of one person more value than another person. Does work come to define your being?

In some respects, what you do can have a great impact on who you are. When you invest so much time and energy into a certain activity, and have so much access to a certain field of experience, this can have a great impact on your ingrained-self. You could start to talk in the way a physicist talks, or you could start to think in the way a nurse thinks. So certain aspects of the way you engage with the world are affected by your profession. Many people define themselves almost completely by what they do. This might provide positivity when your career is in alignment with your highest truth. However, very often we are doing things which are not in alignment with our passion-being. Most of us work because we need to, not because we want to. We are doing the jobs that we were able to get, not the jobs that we dreamed of doing or the jobs we still dream of doing. We are working in conditions which might stifle our passion-being, and working hours which might drain us and keep us away from the things we would rather be doing, like spending time with our families or doing the activities that we love.

What can you do when you are forced to work in a job that you hate, or one that you know is not in alignment with your highest truth, because you need the money and you cannot find anything better? What if your work makes you feel stagnant and dissatisfied five days of every week, but you cannot see a way out? Should you possibly jeopardise your responsibilities by quitting your job in this case? These are difficult questions, and require you to do much introspection on your career and your relationship with money. But the most basic truth, the truth behind all truths, is that you are never completely stuck in situations like these. You are never without a way towards godliness, no matter what your situation is. Finding that godliness might not come immediately, and might require a lot of planning and risk on your part, but you are not meant to be in a situation which stifles your godliness. None of us are, since our godliness is our highest truth, the truth we are meant to find. These situations are merely illusions, and we might be reinforcing them due to our ingrained-self or our inability to have openness

and readiness for newness. But the highest truth is that you are more than the situation, and once you can remember that, you can begin to move towards situations which are supportive of your godliness.

So what can you do right now if you are in a job that you are dissatisfied with? One of the most powerful things that you can do is to move yourself into a new field of experience, even when you are within the job that makes you miserable. Try to take any breaks that you can to engage with your true passion-being, and bring physical reminders into your surroundings of what your passion-being is. In this way, you start to enter the space of openness and readiness for reaching a new situation. If the situation cannot change, then infuse godliness into it. Find a way to practice your powerful nature, or to create beauty, or to bring kindness and love into what you are doing right now. You can be the source of godliness in difficult situations, and spread it into your surroundings.

It is important to remember that your truest nature is not defined by your career. When you consider professional life as more important than other aspects of your life, you might be living outside of yourself. This is because you might be seeing work as tied to your own sense of self-worth, and the more success you have at work, the more you might feed this idea. You could consider the progression up a career ladder as the main indication of your development. You aim for the objectives of status and power in your work, sometimes at the cost of joy, connection and even your own health. Work is one of your commitments in life, but it should not lead you to abandon or neglect your other commitments. When work becomes a marker of your self-worth, you are forgetting that your deepest self is godliness, and progress at work is merely one aspect of your development. When your aim is simply to make more and more money, you need to question what the money really means to you, and why you are sacrificing so many other parts of your life in order to have it.

At its heart, work is a beautiful way of expressing and experiencing. We can practice many different aspects of our godly nature, and can have an impact on the world and the lives of others. We can discover higher levels of our true nature through our work, deepening our commitment to the world through the activities which our professions involve. Work also gives you a sense of dignity for many reasons. It demonstrates to you that you are powerful and able to have an impact on the external. It shows you that you are able to provide for yourself and those who depend on you. You have a sense of pride for the way that you can impact on your surroundings, and respect the processes involved in your line of work. You build up a bank of knowledge which helps you to feel a sense of purpose and fulfilment. So work can be a powerful reminder of our powerful nature.

When you are doing work that feeds goals of upliftment, both for yourself and for other people, you are engaged in godliness every time you do your work. Your work could bring light and love into the world, or, through doing something that is not in alignment with your deepest truth, you could be adding to the emotional and mental baggage of everyone involved through your own resentments. Find work that reminds you of your godliness, and if you cannot do this, then find ways to infuse godliness into your work. Whether you work as a homemaker, an academic or a plumber, your work is meant to be godly.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What is your main motivation for doing the work that you do?
- × How much is your work a reflection of your true nature? How does it allow you to evolve in every aspect of your being?
- × How can you infuse godliness into aspects of your work which you might be dissatisfied with?

Ideas to reflect on: Defining yourself by your work; Work and passion-being; Work as a source of dignity.



One of the most challenging aspects of many people's lives is their relationship with money. Most of us want more of it, and do not have enough to do all of the things we really want to do. Those of us with a lot of it are often plagued with feelings of guilt when we notice the poverty in the world. Many of us have so little that we cannot even afford to buy the essential things for our sustenance and dignity. A lot of us are stuck in jobs we hate, and still feel that we do not get paid enough for what we are doing. There is also the pervasive worry about debt and the financial future.

How many of us can say that we see money in a positive light, or that we have positive emotional reactions to the thought of our relationship with money? How many of us can say that we have complete control over our money, and not that our money is controlling us?

When we start to think about what money actually means to us, we might be surprised at the impact which it has had on our ingrained-self. We often tie money closely to our work, and see it as an end which we reach towards in some cases of service. In essence, money can become the driver behind the things we undertake. We might even measure the success of a venture by the amount of money which it is able to generate. The importance

of money in the world has led many people towards a distorted relationship with money, where they are even willing to sacrifice their own dignity and the dignity of others in order to have more money.

Money means potential. It means power in the sense that you can determine your surroundings through the use of money. When you have a lot of money, you can decide exactly what clothes you wear, where you go on holiday, what type of house you live in, and which activities you engage in every day. You get to make an impression on the world, claim more space and property for yourself, and expand your field of experience and expression greatly. It has also come to mean power over other people. You get to determine how other people spend their time and energy through your use of the power of money. You could be surrounded by different people because of your money, and demand a level of respect purely based on how much you earn. It might seem that the more money you have, the greater your potential is for leading a full and rewarding life, and for evolving your passion-being. You simply are able to do so much more when you have money, and this must mean that your passion-being can evolve on higher levels depending on how much money you have.

But is this perception necessarily true? Is it somehow better to have more money? Even though this might go against much of what our societies have come to be based on, the simple answer to this question is no. Our ability to experience and express, and even the levels which we are able to do this on, are not dependent on money at all. We have just as much potential to reach great levels of expression and experience even when we are poor. We can experience the height of our emotionplace, the beauty of our bodyplace, and the furthest reaches of our mindplace, without any money. We can travel deep into our soulplace at absolutely no cost to us. We can have connection and meaning with our family and friends no matter how much money we have. Money might be able to offer us different experiences, but these are in no way better experiences. Money might be able to help us to express

ourselves differently, but this expression is still not on any higher level than you could do for free. You might be able to afford new tools for your passion-being, but even if you do not have these tools you can still live in passion-being. So the idea that money offers us higher levels of spirituality, and higher levels of being in the world, is simply an illusion. But how has this illusion become so pervasive? How have so many people become determined to earn as much money as they can amass, purely based on this illusion that wealth equals growth?

A part of this illusion is that we automatically feel empowered when we have more money, and this might lead us to exercise our power more. When we have grown up in an environment where we can have our way at any time, and where our money could form a powerful impression on those we meet, then this form of power becomes a major part of our ingrained-self. When we see ourselves being treated worse or having less material things than someone who has money, then this becomes a part of our ingrained-self. But this is simply an illusion. Very many people who have a lot more money than you could be greatly disempowered as a result of their money, and many with a lot less than you have are practicing godliness at amazing levels. Money could be a burden to some people, as it could even be disempowering their other levels of interaction. And poverty might be a propeller to even greater heights in some cases, where people need to reflect on their difficult situations, and this leads them to reflection on all aspects of their lives. But again, these are purely based on individual circumstances, and are not unchangeable rules. The bottom line is that we can experience godliness no matter what our level of wealth is. Money has come to mean different things to different people, and you need to negotiate your own positive relationship with money in your life.

What of this ability to determine the range of expression and experience of others? The more money you have, the higher your ability to influence the day-by-day lives of others. If you start a business, buy lots of advertising,

and hire a thousand workers, you are having a great impact on these people's lives. You determine where they will be for eight hours of the day, and to a large extent you determine their standard of living. You determine the messages people get, and can shape their thinking. Often, people have also been taught to respect those with a lot of money more than those with little money, and this might alter the way people treat you and the way you treat others. The reason why we have been taught this is because of the illusion of power which money gives us, and how we see those with more money as possessing more power, and thus as potential threats or potential helpers. Either way, we tend to respect them more and treat them better than those who we do not find threatening or potentially beneficial. So if you are poor, you might experience great disrespect in your job from authority figures, and you might internalise this as a part of your ingrained-self. Essentially, those with more money are able to dictate the rules of social interactions, as they can shape political conditions through sponsorships and materialise things at a massive scale in the world. The product which has a million dollar advertising budget will have more impact than the product with a fifteen dollar budget. The social awareness campaign sponsored by a multinational company will probably reach more people than a campaign funded by a small NGO.

So overall, money does translate into a certain form of power in the world. Sometimes, the power of money could be a substitute for other, deeper forms of power, and you might risk underdeveloping these parts when you rely on the power of money too much. You might lose the power of dialogue, or the power of compassion, or the power of respect for dignity when you become dependent on the power of money. When you see money as an end in itself, you might lose your passion-being in that pursuit. When you think that your voice is dependent on money, you might lose this voice when money is no longer a factor. While money could be a powerful way to

express and experience, it could also lead you to forget your own godliness when you rely on it for any form of expression or experience.

How does money relate to godliness? Is it godly to be very poor or very rich? Godliness rests in passion-being and in upliftment or bringing godliness to the world. You can do this without money or you can do this with lots of money, but it is always the same. For upliftment to reach higher levels, it needs to be tied to dialogue and connection. So this could happen either with or without money. Godliness is in the place of your being from which your actions stem, and the type of actions themselves or the amount of money involved do not take away from the godliness of them. So being very rich could be equally godly to being very poor.

I do think, however, that widespread poverty speaks poorly of the godliness of the entire society, especially the rich in that society. Poverty has a great impact on the dignity of people. It is a part of our godly responsibility to make sure that each member of society has enough money to maintain their human dignity, and in many ways we live in a world which does not allow this. Finding a path to godliness is only possible through the upliftment of all people, and often this needs to be financial upliftment. When people in a particular society cannot afford to determine their own means of sustenance and their own dignity when they want to, then it is the responsibility of the society to offer upliftment.

Is money necessarily a good thing or a bad thing? It is neither. It is a tool, and in this case it is a tool which is not essentially good or bad. The person who uses that tool can determine the impact of it. The person who desires that tool and is willing to do anything to have it, might become a slave to the illusions which the tool holds. If you allow negativity in your relationship with money to fester, you might find that it becomes a tool for spreading negativity in your life. If you are unable to control your money and to find love around it, you might find that fear and anger arise around it.

What are the limits of sacrificing your dignity in order to make more money? This is something which you need to determine for yourself. You need to decide how important making money is to you. Sometimes you have a responsibility or commitment which requires you to sacrifice your dignity momentarily in order to fulfil it. This is an action which you need to evaluate yourself. But the truth is that you are never being paid enough for misery or degradation, because these things have lasting effects on your ingrained-self. You are showing yourself that a human-being is able to reach for darkness, and is willing to become a slave to money. Finding ways to incorporate passion-being into your money-making and ways of reclaiming your dignity might help you to overcome these situations. But staying in that situation will continually affect your relationship with money. Money will become inextricably tied to the darkness which surrounded its manifestation. Re-evaluate this in your life, and try to find light and love around your relationship with money.

Making more money might not always lead you to more joy, power, dignity, love and connection. So if you desperately want more money, a good question to ask yourself would be: why? What do you hope to gain by having more money? This question will help you to evaluate whether it is worth sacrificing certain parts of yourself to get more money, or whether you are falling into the illusion of power which money offers you. We all need money, but we also need to be aware of the impact of our desire to have more money.

If you have a positive relationship with money, does this mean that your money will grow? Will you automatically have more money? It is possible to be open and ready for money to enter your life, but money will only flow into your life if it is in alignment with you. So if you are in a place of growing spiritually, but money is still associated with darkness to you, then the money probably will not come. Or, if you are in a place of relying on darkness, and money offers you a means to light, then the money also

probably will not come. If you long for money to give you a sense of completion in your life, and if the money becomes an end in itself, then perhaps you do not want the money to come. You need to ask yourself why you want more money to come into your life, and see if the answers are really in alignment with your godly nature.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What is your relationship with money? Do you want more of it, and why? How does your money make you feel? Are you in control of your money or is it controlling you?
- × What do you think more money will be able to offer you?

Ideas to reflect on: Money as a tool; Different amounts of respect for different amounts of money; Poverty in a society.

Possession and Attachment

What is your relationship to the material things in your life? There is so much beauty, creativity, expression and experience which can flow from being in the presence of material things: being in a home that gives you joy, being able to buy a beautiful artwork, being able to eat a delicious meal, or being able to have money and support yourself and your family. These things can serve as spaces for expressing truths about yourself, and can serve as reminders of the godly parts of yourself. But often, we forget that they are only transient and mediated things. We become so attached to the idea of having that we forget about being. There is a big difference between living lightly next to things, and living through and holding on to things, where our relationship to external factors starts to influence our ideas about ourselves.

For many people, possession is tied to a sense of accomplishment – the more you have, the more you think you are. This can become dangerous, since self-worth starts to be based on something external to oneself. When

you base your idea of success and achievement on how much money you have, you necessarily want to get more and more money in order to feel more of these good feelings of success and achievement. Something external is starting to define and regulate the good feelings in your life, and you are living a results-driven life instead of a passion-driven life. The latter type of life has merits since it can exist without external validation, while the former is transient, erratic, and ultimately empty since it does not reflect your highest truth. There is always more to own, more to have, and more to do. When only results make you feel good, the results will never be big enough for you, and the joys in the process are lost. Attachment to results is attachment to something that might never materialise, and attachment to illusions.

Sometimes, possession can be a link to the world and a link to a part of yourself. This encompasses both possession in alignment with your highest self, and possession which is invested in the illusions of the world of things. When you have sentimentality around something, or when something reminds you about the good things about yourself, such as a religious text which you carry with you, a picture of your children, or a gift from your partner which you wear, you are living your passion-being by using an object as a medium. You are affirming these good and fulfilling parts of yourself. You are speaking about a deeper connection, a deeper truth, than simply the object itself, and the object acts as a symbol of that truth. The object or possession is not the most important thing to you. A good test of this is when you can see the object being left out of your life, and the feeling or understanding which it represents still existing. It is not bad to love your house and to love the things you have accumulated in it; when you love your surroundings you are able to carry joy with you in those places. But when these objects begin to define you, and when you cannot imagine your life without them, you are moving into another type of relationship with material possessions.

When you start to hold onto things instead of live next to things, and when you cannot imagine a life without the objects in your life, you are starting to fall into a vicious reliance on the illusions of life. These things can be defined as illusions because they have no substance of their own, since they are tied to what we make of them, and they have the ability to disappear as quickly as they came along regardless of how hard we try to hold on to them. When you base your life and self-worth on these types of things, you are saying that the illusions of life are more important to you than the truth of life, and the deepest truth about yourself. Again, you can test this through a simple thought experiment: can you still see yourself being satisfied and living in your passion-being if you did not have that car or house or those clothes? Or, if you dream of one day having material wealth, can you still say that you will be happy and satisfied if the material wealth never comes? Or does your fulfilment in life rely on possessions? When your idea of yourself and your happiness, even the future idea of it, is tied to material things, that hunger will never be satisfied. You are starting to teach yourself that you are not enough without the stuff. And once you have the stuff you think you want, you will need to start wanting more in order to satisfy this new idea of yourself as someone who needs stuff.

Your relationship to the stuff in life might simply be a desire to fulfil an ideal which you have about what a good life looks like, and when you are simply satisfying appearances you are necessarily living for other people or for your ingrained-self. You are building an illusion about yourself which you hope will fool others and yourself into thinking that you are powerful. You become attached to the material things in order to maintain these appearances, and you start living outside of yourself.

The end-result of attachment is often addiction, which can be defined as the compulsive reliance on the object of your attachment to the point where other aspects of your life are negatively affected. We become addicted to things when we rely on the feelings we get from the object, activity or place,

and when these feelings act as a substitute for feelings of self-worth, validation or passion-being. This could happen when sex becomes your way of telling yourself that you are loved, when money becomes your measure of power, or when food becomes the only thing that you feel you have control over. Addiction results in being emotionally stunted, and relying on a feeling which is tied to the illusion. This illusion is not only the physical object, but also how you perceive that object. Overcoming emotional addiction can be extremely difficult when you have lost any sense of self without the object acting as a substitute for feelings of love, power or control.

Attachment does not only work through activities or objects, but can become a factor in emotional realms as well. You can become attached to relationships, particular feelings, ways of perceiving external factors, or particular ideas about yourself. Of course, these factors are also illusions, and in fact are shifting all the time. You are dealing with new things, new events, and new understandings, and when you expect your emotions to stay static despite this, you are living in another form of illusion. This attachment to being emotionally static and experiencing only a single emotional state can lead you to being emotionally numb: you find ways to deaden yourself instead of feeling any changes in emotion. You cut yourself away from people, you take mood-altering drugs, or you over-stimulate yourself with deadening media. You convince yourself that you are not able to deal with changing emotions, but at least you can understand numbness. When you become attached to a certain emotion or to being emotionally static, you move away from emotional maturity.

Only in understanding and dealing with different emotions can you move to a higher space of being around those emotions. Only by having many different experiences of yourself can you remember that even though things can change, you still have a deeper substance and a higher reality. Only when you can listen to different ideas about something and see it in different ways can you understand that your commitment to a single way of

seeing is an illusion, influenced by perspective, and cannot fully describe your deepest truth. And then you can start to find ways of thinking and perceiving which allow for your development and the development of others. Emotional attachment quells the dynamic, creative and powerful parts of us, since we are becoming invested in the illusions of life instead of using them, playing with them, and truly reaching towards understanding them.

One of the most extreme forms of emotional attachment is when you become attached to the emotion that another person gives you. In most cases, this is when a romantic partner or close friend or relative becomes the sole source of your feelings of validation, power, love, control, connection, or self-worth. The relationship becomes like a feeding frenzy: you expect to always get the affirmations, validations and good feelings from that person without considering the changes which any relationship goes through. Getting good feelings from someone close to you is a wonderful thing, but when you become reliant on that person for those feelings, you start to move from living next to, to living through that person. And you become unable to maintain a positive self-image or positive feelings without these things being provided by another person. Your own spiritwork is resisted, and again, as with any attachment, you are teaching yourself that you are not enough without this external factor. In this case the external factor is the validation which you get from another person. Sometimes this goes to terrible extremes, and people feel that another person is their possession, or that they are the possession of another person. And then, when you start to realise that you are still not feeling powerful, you resent the person who is supposed to make you feel powerful. Since they are your possession, you feel justified in acting out against them because they are not working the way that they are supposed to anymore, and not making you feel the way they are supposed to. When a marriage is based on this form of possession, it can be devastating to realise that your partner is not able to satisfy your every emotional need. Your

partner, your possession, is not doing its job. This form of possession could lead to relationships breaking down, or to various forms of abuse.

When you grow attached to your possessions, they really do start to possess you. You become consumed with the having of things or the controlling of things, and you rely on the sense of certainty which you feel through owning these things. The key is to relate to objects, activities, emotions and people in a way where you are already full, self-sufficient and godly, and where the external factors can be expressions of that, but are not necessary for the sustenance of those truths about you. Enjoying things, loving them, and living lightly next to them is part of the joy in life. But we can quickly become wrapped up in obsessing over the illusions of life, and we forget that these illusions are made up of things which are not the truest and deepest part of ourselves.

Sometimes the very things that give us great passion and joy can become the things we are tied to, and which ultimately lead to distorted views of ourselves. When you do not achieve the results that you want in life, you start to see yourself as a failure because the results are not coming. If you dream of being a famous film star and work relentlessly towards it, and it does not happen in the way you had envisioned, you will resent the fact that the fame does not come. You are becoming attached to the idea of fame instead of living your passion of acting. But you do not see that you can still act in dynamic and fulfilling ways without having the results which you have become attached to. Passion-being is not results-driven. It cannot be, by its definition. So, when you feel resentments arise, it might be useful for you to start to examine what you are becoming attached to. Your dreams are beautiful, creative and passion-fuelling things, but your dreams can become attachments too. Living lightly is living in your passion-being, experiencing things as they are, and being able to let them go, knowing that external factors do not define you.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × Have you become attached to any of the possessions or emotions in your life?
- × What is your relationship with the potential outcomes and results of your passion-being?

Ideas to reflect on: Living next to objects; Living through objects; Addiction; Addictive relationships.



Growing Up and Getting Stuck

Many people say that they miss the innocence of childhood, that they wish they could go back to school and avoid the responsibilities that have since befallen them, and that growing up is a difficult and unpleasant experience. At the same time, most embrace the freedoms which come with growing up: the idea of being responsible for your own happiness and wellbeing, the idea of reaching higher levels of self-actualisation, and making your own rules. Growing up also entails reaching higher levels of being, and confronting the aspects of our ingrained-self. We constantly feel the call to higher states of being and higher levels of self-knowing and responsibility, but many of us resist growth. We look back to earlier stages of our development, before we were made to face the responsibilities and challenges which we have had to face, and we idealise them.

Real growing up is spiritual evolution. It is the commitment to come from the strong, capable, passionate, and wise parts of ourselves, and to not do the things that hold us back from all of these parts of ourselves. It is about

giving up on the things we hold on to that might have been comfortable for us, but that were ultimately stunting our growth. That is why growing up is so difficult for many people: part of the definition is that you are moving out of your comfort zone, moving into newness and uncertainty, and away from your current understandings of yourself. Moving into new phases might also involve very stressful events, like rites of passage, moving to a new city, making commitments in your relationships, and taking on new responsibilities. We often let ourselves become overwhelmed by the particulars of new phases, and do not recognise and appreciate the new places in ourselves that we are coming from as we move into the new states of spiritual growth.

Growing up is recognising the things that do not work for you in life, recognising your mistakes and weaknesses and toxicity in your life, learning to understand, negotiate, and deal with these things, and then creating space for passion-being. It is also recognising your strengths, and realising the godliness and the love that resides in you. You learn more about your passion-being so that you can commit yourself to experiencing your strengths on higher levels. This process does not stop. You are never fully grown, because life is never stagnant. There is no race to be finished with spiritual evolution. You are constantly finding yourself back at incomplete.

But you can be committed to growth. And this commitment does not need to be constantly exhausting, and you do not need to constantly beat yourself up for every mistake, or constantly scramble for new opportunities to experience your growth in new ways. This type of life works for some people, but ultimately this resembles the race of reaching results in life, and not necessarily the act of spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is patient. It is not only about action and reaching new states or new results, but instead it is about the thought behind those things, and about acknowledging the emotions which align with those things, and then reaching for communion with deeper parts of yourself and god. So action alone will not lead you to

growing up. However, sometimes when you are in a destructive cycle, taking action to get out of that cycle is a big part of growing up. Still, in addition to that action, reflection on your situation and reaching for higher levels of being are essential to the process of growth.

So how do you know when it is time to grow up and not feel rushed on the one hand or stuck on the other? The process has a lot to do with being called. Sometimes people try to rush this process with quick-fix theories, philosophies or religions, and they have not felt the truth of growth in their being. So they give up when the new way of understanding does not work as quickly as they have adopted it. Sometimes you might have more planning to do, or you have to make more space for your passion-being, or you have to speak about things with people in new ways before the new level of development can come. The trick is to look closely at what you are feeling in your situation, and to realise which parts of your life are holding you back and which parts allow you the greatest freedom and joy. If the pain or potential for hurt in your current situation is immediate, then maybe immediate action is called for. But often we have to dig deep to see why we are being hurt by a situation, and which parts of ourselves are resisting a godly life. And only after much reflection can we make a deeper commitment to new levels of passion-being.

We often mistake growing up for growing cynical, or for growing specialised and fitting into the expectations of the society we find ourselves in. Many times, this is actually holding us back so much more than allowing us to grow. Your passion-being is like the voice of God in you, and sometime that voice greatly contradicts the voice of the society you live in. Sometimes, the voices of other people cause you great pain, or make you cause great pain to someone else. Your passion-being is about joy, love, godliness, freedom, upliftment and connection, and growing up necessarily moves in this direction. When the expectations you live by stifle this part of your being, you are not growing up. You are instead participating in your own spiritual

incarceration. Growing up is being able to recognise when you are becoming invested in being someone or resting in a situation that does not resonate with your passion being, and then moving towards your passion-being despite the difficulty of overcoming this situation. Growing up is being able to recognise that your addictions and your destructive behaviour speak about the distorted parts of yourself, and then moving towards the godly part of yourself instead. It is acknowledging all of your excuses for not following the voice of your soul, and understanding these excuses as brought about by insecurities. It is knowing that you were meant to live in love and not in fear.

Some people get stuck at a certain level of development, which could be psychological or spiritual. Getting stuck is when you become invested and committed to an illusion about yourself. You see something that is comfortable, or an idea about yourself that people respond to, and run with it. The idea that you become invested in is not necessarily positively viewed by others. Even when this idea is negative, you might embrace it, because the part of your being that is individual craves recognition, understanding, definition and validation. So, even when this recognition is destructive, you might cling to it as a form of certainty in your life.

When you become invested in the idea that you are the good-looking person, the smart person, the lazy person, the fat person, the disabled person, or the nervous person, getting stuck might come in the form of an investment in those labels that make you feel somehow defined and understandable. You might then struggle to see yourself outside of those labels. But these labels do not encompass the full breadth of your being, or the full potential which you have for love and godliness. And while you can recognise the labels and even embrace them, you need to know that you are more than those labels, and that your passion-being does not need to be contained by them. You need to be able to understand the implications of over-investment in these labels, and then look at yourself above that and reach towards higher parts of yourself.

Getting stuck might also involve a fear of the changes in life, and a fear of the implications of your passion-being. You might fear the potential disappointments of change, and stick with the life that you know instead of the uncertainty of a new form of being. You might fear the things that you perceive as causing irreparable damage, like confrontations, losses, confessions, and commitments. But often, these frightening things might be necessary for the development of your passion-being. A big part of growing up is being able to understand why you are resistant to these difficult experiences, and why the payoff of staying stuck is worth more to you than living in your passion-being. Recognising these things could be a powerful step in reaching for spiritual growth.

New does not always mean better, and change does not always mean growth. Being able to recognise when you are moving into new levels of development, and into spaces where you are able to express your passion-being in new ways, is an important part of being spiritually in-tune. Sometimes the new situations are simply manifestations of the same old debilitating, distorted thoughts which you might hold about yourself, like when you move from one bad relationship to the next. Action without reflection will probably result in just doing more of the same thing and not doing much growing up at all, even though to everyone else it will look like you are developing.

Growth needs to come from the inside out. You need to process each new level of development fully in order to align your entire being with it. We have limitless potential for growth, and we can reach amazing levels of light and love in our lives. Reaching towards our highest truth is our godly calling.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What has been the most challenging experiences of growing up which you have been through?
- × Which aspects of your life do you currently think that you need to grow in?
- × Which actions that are necessary for your growth have you been avoiding?

Ideas to reflect on: Commitment to growth; Getting stuck; Investment in labels; Fear of change.



When Reality Shatters Ideals

What about when bad things happen to good people? What about when tragedy strikes and you are unprepared for it? You might think that you have everything figured out: you know who you are, you are working towards your personal and social goals and you are having success in these fields. And it all falls apart. Something happens that you could never have been prepared for. You witness or you are affected by outright injustice. Bad things happen that no one ever deserves, and no one could accept. Tragedy, loss, and change come about which are extreme and forceful. Deterioration and decline take place, relationships break down and the most extreme uglinesses show themselves in other people and in yourself.

And you cannot tell yourself not to be shattered. You cannot tell yourself not to start questioning everything that you have grown to believe in and rely on. Telling yourself any of these things might feel like hiding from

the reality that tragedies have taken place, things you cannot take back or control, and you will probably have to live with the results of them forever.

Many people, from those deeply committed to personal growth or deeply invested in a belief-system, to those who do not think about spirituality much at all, shy away from the thought of tragedy. Why consider it unless you have to? Why go to those dark places unless a situation absolutely requires it? This avoidance of thinking about tragedy is not necessarily negative; obsessing about potential tragedy and letting those fears consume you will hold you back from any joy. But as much as you try to avoid it, things that you do not choose, and things that hurt you, frighten you and sometimes break you, happen to everyone.

So where do you go for comfort when the reality of tragedy enters your life? Is comfort even an option? Do you choose to put the blinders on and relentlessly try to reinspire your trust in those beliefs which you have based your development on? Does the event, the tragedy, begin to define your life, and will you forever be living under the idea of being ‘after tragedy’ and long for life ‘before tragedy’? Will you learn to merely bear your new life, but resent it nonetheless? Will you live for the day you hope will come when circumstances change again?

Sometimes the events that affect us greatly and which challenge us most are not necessarily tragedies. They can be called defining events: events which, by their radical nature and their effects on a developed system of being, affect the stories of our lives profoundly. These defining events encompass loss, illness, crime, moving to a new place, divorce, and new responsibilities: the very personal things which affect the way we see ourselves and the way we see the world. Sometimes it is not only a single event, but possibly a growing disillusionment with some aspect of your beliefs or identity. Whichever form these defining events take, they lead to a fundamental shift in your ingrained-self. You might never see the world in the same way again. You might become more cautious than you have been

before, or you might not be able to do the things which you enjoyed before the event. These external factors form giant bookmarks in our ingrained-self that we can never remove.

It is almost impossible to ignore the pain, resentment and anger that these events inspire. But in every such defining event, there is the possibility of responding out of grace, guided by faith and acceptance, or on the other hand there is the possibility of a response of constant overwhelming resentment, constant questions of 'what if?', and longing for something that can never again be. The latter response is not a response of weakness. It is not a response that can be looked down on. It is real. It is human, and very much an understandable emotional response after tragedy. Your anger is manifest in a large degree of resentment. A destructive response to this kind of anger is to start to resent your own resentment. Anger, numbness, incomprehension and devastation are all a part of a healthy initial response to tragedy, because it shows commitment to the life you have chosen, and it shows the passion-being which you might feel is jeopardised by the defining event. It would take an extremely evolved soul to bypass these initial angers to the tragedies of life. When you feel the emotions, even thoughtlessly, even when they have no meaning yet, you are already starting a process. And all of this anger might never go away. You will always have a spark of this anger in you; it is part of what defining events are all about. This is anger that you are not always in control, and that something you relied on has changed. To some degree, you have formed an attachment to the factors of your life, as we all do. And the defining event has shown you that you are not in complete control of these factors, and that they are simply a part of the divine illusion. Anger arises when you begin to notice this, and we all experience anger in our lives.

Another destructive response to this anger is when you rest in those feelings of resentment and depression which might flow from it, and when you allow these emotions to become the basis of your existence. You allow

these feelings to be sustained and chosen as your entire life story instead of simply a defining event within a larger narrative. You may be falling into a destructive trap, a cycle of replaying the event that can block your road to grace and development. Reaching the point of being ready to return to passion-being, to forgive and to understand, could take a long time depending on the defining event. Grace is about finding strength, and being able to find a constant in life. Grace is about reacting out of a sense of faith and understanding. The particulars of that faith and understanding need to be individually developed. But it needs to be something which transcends events in your life, something which goes deeper than your initial reactions to these events. So your grace needs to rest in your deepest nature of power, joy, infinity, freedom, love and connection. You can be delivered from the hardships you face by the grace of God.

There is a point where you feel the event begin to define your being, and you wake up with the story that this condition, place or tragedy is all your life can be. This is probably the moment when you need to consider consciously reaching towards grace. Grace might be incredibly difficult to choose, and you may feel that you are fooling yourself or disrespecting the event when choosing it. But the event is already over. You have already moved into a new life after it. And while you can cherish the beauty of what you have lost, the sense of loss is merely an illusion of the world of things. In truth, you are always connected to the highest version of the object of your loss. Because everything is connected to love, and love is infinity. Your soulplace is already one with what you have lost. We are merely moving through the process of life in the world of things in order to experience the closeness and the distance of our being and everything we encounter.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × Which defining events have had the greatest impact on you?
- × Are you still holding anger about any defining events?
- × Have you done something personally which changes your entire idea about yourself? How do you handle this type of defining event?
- × How and why do you still blame yourself for the tragedies in your life?

Ideas to reflect on: Tragedy; Defining events; Grace.



Anger

What makes you angry? You could become angry from simple events in your life, such as when you stub your toe, or when you are stuck in traffic. You could also experience great anger when you encounter tragedies, such as when you lose a loved one to death, or when a relationship ends. Anger could stem from socio-political injustices in a society, and collective anger might see large-scale protests.

Is anger a part of your emotionplace? Is anger simply a negative emotional reaction? Anger goes much deeper than the emotionplace. In fact, the real form of anger does not refer to your emotional response.

Anger has to do with your reaction to the world and your relationship with the world. We have all experienced anger before, because anger is a part of how we deal with the workings of the world of things. Anger happens when things do not go the way we want them to. We become angry because we are not completely in control, and we do not have complete power and fulfilment in the present moment. Anger could show up as the disappointment or displeasure when something has happened or is happening which we would like to change, but often have no power over. Anger is not necessarily expressed through rage, but can be expressed in many different

forms. Our state of being incomplete is the main source of our anger. Often this incompleteness is manifest in external factors: we do not have the money that we want, or we do not have the control over our money that we would like; our work does not satisfy us, or our projects do not go in the direction that we want; our relationships do not follow our desired path, or we struggle to find the perfect partner. All of these factors inspire anger in us. We could also become angry with ourselves. If we are still struggling with the same emotional baggage which we have had for thirty years, we could become angry that we are unable to overcome it. If we have issues with our bodies which seem to be unending, this could lead to anger. So essentially, anger is the force which arises from our current lack of complete power, and the desire to take full control of these situations. We see ourselves as incomplete and as unable to control every aspect of our lives, and something arises within us, a force or energy which is called anger.

How we deal with anger becomes very important, since it informs many different aspects of our lives. Anger is manifested as raw energy: a building up inside of a force that cannot be fully understood or described. We are bubbling over with something that very often we do not know how to express. We are affected by a stirring which does not only impact one aspect of our being, but all of them. We can physically feel anger. It affects us mentally, as well as leading to emotional instability. We can feel this stirring all the way from our soulplace.

Essentially, anger is a force born of the friction between our infinite selves and our worldly selves. We are confronted with our spatial, temporal and incomplete existence in a way that fuels us with an indescribable energy. When we notice our distance from completeness and from total control, we become angry.

In this way, anger gives us a lot of potential. That is why anger can often be an extremely powerful thing to witness in other people, and to express ourselves. Watching the expression of anger in a dance, play or film,

or seeing the release of anger in someone who might have been holding on to it for a long time, can be an inspirational and affecting display to witness. When we can find an outlet for our anger, we can experience the power of this force. Anger can lead to amazing creativity, where this energy can be expressed in physical form. We can also feel the sense of release and the way that raw power is moving through us when we shout at the top of our lungs or punch a pillow to express our anger. These acts allow us to direct our anger into a single, non-destructive action. We can still experience the anger, but we channel it into physical expression instead of the raw energy which it originates as.

However, often anger does not get expressed through creativity or in a directed fashion, and instead becomes translated as powerfully negative emotional reactions in response to the inability of our transcendental selves to take charge. We feel hateful towards someone who causes us anger, or we feel frustrated that we cannot overcome a situation, or we despair in a loss which we have suffered. These emotional reactions are a logical extension of anger, but when they are fuelled by the full force of anger's raw energy, they can lead to destructive actions. It is important to be able to distinguish our anger from the emotional responses to it. We can manage the anger, but often we internalise it and let it become the emotions. We might even fuel these emotions with negative thoughts. We do not have to have the powerful emotional reactions to every instance of anger. We can look at anger as it is, and channel it into forms of godliness and power or release. We can either direct our power into positive action, or we can find only despair in the situations from which the anger arises.

Problems can arise when you use your anger to try and force the circumstances to bend to your control. You try and make your partner do what you want, or you try to hold onto a failed project, or you are vengeful towards bureaucrats who will not give you what you want immediately. These actions ignore the lesson of anger, which is to point you towards the

duality of your being and to offer you the opportunity to appreciate your incomplete, worldly state. And when you fuel your actions with negative emotions, such as frustration, hatred or resentment, these actions will not easily be able to lead towards godliness. The key is to evaluate anger and your emotional reactions to it, and to find an effective and godly course of action in response to your anger.

Anger which is caused by injustice should absolutely be used to address those injustices, but you should not let your anger dictate the terms of your protest. The reason is that the raw energy which comprises anger, that friction between what you want and what the reality is right now, might cause you to resort to aspects of yourself which bypass your mindplace and your soulplace, and rest solely in your bodyplace and emotionplace. This is dangerous because it might result in violence, or in the disrespect of your own humanity and the humanity of others. So, your anger could become rage. Anger often leads to direct responses from our bodyplace and emotionplace more than our mindplace and soulplace. This is because it arises as a reaction to our spatial and temporal being, leading to very physical reactions which often result in us forgetting our godliness or soulplace in those moments due to a sense of lost power. You can actually feel anger moving through your body. Since it is raw energy and defies understanding in many ways, it could easily bypass your mindplace. And since your emotionplace is often a measure of your proximity to passion-being and godliness, the circumstances which bring about anger might lead you to forget these parts of your being and have strong emotional reactions. So when you do not consciously direct your anger, it will naturally express in physical and emotional responses, which could mean violence.

Why is violence necessarily counter to the objectives of upliftment? Because it stems from a place which disrespects the dignity of the person who you direct your violence towards. It also contradicts the principles of dialogue and of not forcing change onto others unless their way of being is

disrespecting the freedom of someone else. There might be cases where violence can be justified in different ways, but as a strategy, violence is counter to your godly nature. Anger is one of the main causes of violence, because it is a force which stems from a moment of forgetting your godly nature and noticing your lack of power in the world. Often people try to reclaim that power through force.

When you notice that your anger is being expressed negatively, it is useful to analyse the source of that anger, and to evaluate why it has become so overwhelming to you. Speaking to someone about your anger might be a good step in this direction. Or, you could journal about the moments that cause you anger, and try to find godliness through anger.

While anger has often been made to seem like a negative force, it is true that we can find effective ways to deal with anger, and that we can manage it in our lives to our own benefit as well as the benefit of others. We might develop our consciousness to the level where we are able to not have very strong emotions when anger arises. Using this potential for upliftment and godliness can lead to great levels of personal and societal growth.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × Which aspects of your life cause you to experience anger? These could be small moments which you experience from time to time, or anger which you have been holding on to for years.
- × Are there ways to manage this anger effectively? What do you think you will need in order to deal with your anger?
- × How do you currently express anger in your life? What are your usual strategies for dealing with the anger that you experience?

Ideas to reflect on: Rage; Directing anger into release; Violence; Creativity through anger.

Love, Part I

Behind the Feelings

For many people, the meaning of the word ‘love’ is difficult to clarify. In fact, love seems to be one of the most elusive concepts of all, a concept which philosophies and religions have been dealing with for many years. Despite this difficulty in defining love, it also seems to be the concept that most people want to experience, and a concept most people know is good. How do you define something so intuitive, something which seems to be so universally revered, and which most people reach for? How do you begin to think about love when it seems to exist solely in the emotionplace? We are given lots of ideas, like the idea that love is complicated, or love has to be passionate, or love is redemptive, or love is a possession. But these ideas might simply be a part of our ingrained insecurities of love, and not encompass what love really is.

Most of us know that love is good because the word ‘good’ can be used as a definition of love itself. Love is the thing that really, most deeply, defines our humanity and what lies behind the illusions of life. Love is a glimpse of the real you, the one behind the stories that you tell yourself and

others, and the stories that you are told about yourself. Love is the godly part of you. And that part is necessarily good, because it is in alignment with all the things which bring about good in the world: connection, passion-being, upliftment, and truth. Love becomes confused within other discourses, which add countless layers of complication to our idea of love. These discourses include attraction, possession, desire, and dependence, all of which become attached to our ideas of love. Even our self-definitions become tied to our proximity to romantic love.

Love might be further confused when we think that it has many different forms, like the initial crazy, overwhelming, needy infatuation, to the eventual disappointments when your partner does not completely change your life or make you feel better about yourself, to the confusion when he or she does completely change your life in unexpected ways, to the comfort of just having someone around to grow old with. These different phases of love are not actually true reflections of the love itself, but instead they are reactions of different parts of ourselves and our deep-seated ideas about love. Our egos become tied in, and we start to think in terms of possession and progress. We are overwhelmed by sexual and emotional desire, or we are bored and resentful and disappointed when things do not work out like we had fantasised. These reactions do not mean that what we are experiencing is not love, but it is useful to be able to distinguish the reactions to love from what love really is. The reactions can sometimes mar our entire understanding and experience of the love-connection, and when we can look past them and analyse them, we can move to higher levels of that deeper love-connection.

In this way, love is not a feeling. The feelings are the things surrounding love: happiness, excitement, longing, sadness, or butterflies in the stomach. The feelings can often mislead us because we have been conditioned to think of certain feelings as associated with love, perhaps from the movies we watch or the books or philosophies we read, or from the

examples of relationships we have seen. When we have been told that negative feelings and images go along with love, for example when we see violent relationships growing up, we could mistake being hurt by someone for being in love with someone. When our idea is that love is unattainable, difficult and unpleasant, we might mistake someone pulling away from us for love. When we think that love involves only physical expression and sexual desire, we could think that the person who turns us on the most is the one that we love the most. When we see love as securing the most favourable and ideal partner in terms of their accomplishments and social or financial clout, we could think that we are most in love with the person who makes us feel most intimidated, or who looks the best on paper. All of these examples are when the feelings which we associate with love act as triggers which tell us that we are experiencing love.

A relationship based on the illusions of love brought about by these feelings will invariably be disappointing in times when the feelings change. If your connection is based on feelings of sexual excitement, when your partner is no longer the most sexually exciting person to you, you will think that you are falling out of love. If your relationship is based on feelings that love is difficult or confusing, when your partner is no longer pulling away from you, you will think that you are falling out of love. When your partner somehow loses their social clout, loses their looks, or loses their job, you will think that you are falling out of love.

The truth is that you can never fall out of love. The circumstances of a relationship can definitely change, and sometimes it is simply better for two people not to be in a relationship when they constantly hold each other back from godliness. But this does not negate the real, deeper love-connection. This love-connection is the purity behind the baggage you and your partner have placed on love. Sometimes this deeper love-connection never existed in a relationship, and instead the expectations of the relationship were the only fuel for the connection. Sometimes this love-connection grows between two

individuals when they have known each other for a long time, and they express the compassion, validation, truth and upliftment which define a love-connection. Sometimes, even though you experience these good things from someone, your illusions about what love should look like hold you back from ever engaging in that love-connection. But this love-connection does not fade when it is based on the expression of the truth of love. What fades are your illusions about love, and sometimes those illusions were all that kept you together.

So what is love? Love is a state of being in relation to other people, not a feeling. It is when you can witness and affirm the life of someone else, and act as a pillar of godliness in their life while seeing godliness in them. Love is connection. It is the experience and affirmation of your connection to another person and, by extension, your connection to everything. Love is upliftment. It is the mutual encouragement of the development of each partner. It is when you can be human around someone and be accepted. It is when you can be godly around someone and be encouraged. So love is the manifestation of the godly connection which we all have for one another. And when you can find someone who demonstrates that godly connection to you most clearly, who validates your humanity and uplifts your godliness, you have found a love-connection.

Part of the reason why love does not always inform romantic relationships is that many people are afraid of what will happen when they expose their humanity to someone else. We have been told that love will complete us or that it will make us somehow superhuman, and when we find ourselves still to be human even when we are in a relationship, we are embarrassed. We do not want that person who we share a love-connection with to know that we are not perfect, because they might not love us anymore. We do not want the world to see that our love-connection has not caused us to be complete, as we imagine it should. But part of the definition of love is acceptance, and our illusions of love are what create the fear that

acceptance will not happen. That is why we do not talk about emotional scars with our partners, or about the problems in our relationship, until it is too late. When you let these emotional scars and problems fester, they can take very negative expressions such as resentment, self-loathing, or betrayals.

These fears are often brought about by a distortion of love, when you look for the results of love without wanting to experience the truth of love itself. When you place conditions on love, you are acting more out of fear than out of love. This is the fear that you will lose that love-connection, that you will not get the results which you seek from it, or that you will not be complete once you have attained it. It is not love when it does not include acceptance, since love is the witnessing of the humanity of other people. But acceptance does not mean that you allow someone to be destructive. Destructiveness contradicts our godly nature, so by enabling destructiveness in someone else, you are not showing them love. It is not love if it is not uplifting.

While we often require commitment and stability in love-connections in order for them to be functional, these things are not intrinsic to the concept and the expression of love. They are part of our worldly manifestation of love. Many of them are undoubtedly necessary, especially so that the love-connections can flourish and provide a sense of family. But the real love is still behind all of those conditions.

While we have very definite images of love, real love goes beyond all of these manifestations. Real love is when this connected state of being exists between all people, when the acceptance of humanity and the encouragement and witnessing of godliness exists between everyone. The truth of the matter is that real love already exists between all people. In fact, it is all that exists between people on the deepest level. We are already that connection behind the façade. We are already the expressions of godliness to each other. We are already the truth of ourselves. That is what our soulplace encompasses. We are just riddled with so much investment in the illusions of life and the fears

of real love that we do not feel it all the time, or know it all the time, or express it all the time. But we all express it at some point; we all reflect our loving nature to each other. Because that is our real nature: godliness. We think that hatred, violence, and destruction are our nature because we mistake circumstance for truth. But this is because we experience fear and the illusion of disconnection in the world, which makes hatred, violence and destruction possible. But really, behind that, around that, inside of that, there is love.

When you find another soul who makes you remember your god-connection, and makes you remember the joy, innocence and truth behind your illusions, you are having a clear glimpse of your godly nature, that all-encompassing love. That is why love for a pet can be so strong. That is why the loss of a love-connection can be so devastating. When you can experience that connection with your friends, family or partner, and when you can see past your fears and not expect everything to be like your perfect picture of love all the time, you are really living in love. When you can see the difference between your illusions of love and the truth of love, you are on the path towards living in your loving nature.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × How do you define love?
- × What types of illusions do you currently hold about love?
- × How do you express your deepest love-connection with everyone around you in your daily life?
- × How have you failed to express your deepest connection to everyone in your life?

Ideas to reflect on: The feelings around love; Fear of love; Love-connection; Love as an expression of the deepest truth.

Love, Part II

Connection and Meaning

We long for love because it is a reminder of our deepest connection. We cherish love because it reminds us that we are a part of something bigger. It is a clear view of the deepest understanding of god, and that is why it feels so good. We start to recognise that there is something higher than the illusion of aloneness. We find passion and joy and excitement in life. We start to see the deepest meaning in life, and that is why people say that love gives their lives meaning. That is why some people are devastated at what they perceive as the loss of love. That is why you cannot stop thinking about the person who lets you experience that sense of meaning, and why many of us want to make formal commitments to love. Why is love so intuitively revered and so affecting for so many people? What exactly is that deepest meaning that love shows us?

That meaning is experiencing our individuality and our connection, feeling the mutual upliftment of souls, experiencing the divinity of our connection with God, and having the witnessing, acceptance, and support of

another person. Through love, we can experience the nature of God, who encompasses all of these things.

A love connection is filled with passion. This does not mean that a love-connection will make you constantly have certain types of feelings. But, because of the nature of love, it allows each individual to live in their passion-being. We are able to be validated and uplifted by another person in those things that give us passion and joy, and share some of these things with that person. That is why relationships often form where there are common interests, and many of these relationships flourish. When you can know that your passion is important to your partner, and when you commit to uplifting their passion-being as well, you are experiencing one aspect of a passionate love-connection.

The witnessing, acceptance, trust and upliftment which a love-connection offers also brings the feelings associated with joy. These are feelings which we might mistake for the essence of the love, and in turn we might call them passion. They could include desire, excitement, happiness or attachment. But these feelings, while often present in a love-connection, are not all that love is about. If you constantly expect these feelings from your partner, you are living in an illusion of a single love connection as a substitute for your own passion-being. You are expecting your partner to give you something which they ultimately have no real control over, namely your feelings. You are being results-driven and not seeing the deeper truth behind those feelings. Sometimes your partner can infuriate you, even when they are coming from a place of love. Sometimes they cannot always offer you excitement in every sphere of your life. Sometimes the challenges which a commitment entails make us think that we are not in love anymore. When we can see that love goes deeper than the feelings, we can experience the true nature of that deepest connection.

Love exists in all of the aspects of our being, not simply in our emotionplace. Conversation is part of the mindplace of a love-connection.

Sex, adventure, and physical closeness are a part of the bodyplace of a love-connection. Witnessing and upliftment are part of the soulplace. A successful love-connection will probably nurture all of these aspects. But an authentic love-connection is when each partner can take responsibility for their own passion-being, and experience love without conditions or expectations. This does not mean that you should not address issues and concerns about your relationship. You absolutely should discuss what you feel needs work in a relationship. But if you rely on your partner to be everything to you, you will probably end up disappointed. You are ignoring another essential aspect of your being: your individuality. While you experience your connection to godliness through loving relationships, you are made in the form of a single person for an important reason. If you do not know what that reason is, then only self-reflection will give you those answers. But that reason is not to sacrifice your individuality altogether, and to rely on another human being for definition. You are teaching yourself and others about a version of humanity which is incapable of self-actualisation, and which is attached to particular feelings which are provided by someone else. And thus you are basing your love connection on a lie about your deepest nature. This type of love connection is likely to lead to resentment.

The want of a particular version of love has also caused many people misery. Many times, the act of searching for love is an obstacle to authentic, deep connections. A desire for an image of love that we have grown to value could hold us back from appreciating the opportunities for experiencing love in our lives right now. We are programmed as individuals to give and receive unique flavours of love, because our bodyplace, mindplace and emotionplace can experience these flavours and savour them in unique ways. But our soul only knows one kind of love, and that is the love behind those flavours. And we are already surrounded by this love. Often we become invested in the idea that we are not worthy of love, or that we will never have love because we have a very definite picture of what that love should look like. We fail to see

that we can experience so much love and live in it when we recognise that this picture is an illusion, and that we can experience that deepest connection and meaning in our own unique way. Our ideas about love might be holding us back from real love. We are not all going to be swept off our feet. We are not always going to experience fulfilment on all levels from a partner. Our partners probably will not solve all of our problems and make us whole. And we will not fall into the same roles that our parents did, and our ideal partners will not neatly fall into the roles we have imagined for them. Love probably will not change your life or make you happy if you were not happy before. But the people in our lives can be our link to that deepest, truest love, experienced in the flavours which our individualities allow or seek out. That is why there is something to be said for the idea of soul mates. It is not coincidence that we encounter the particular people that we come across in our lives. It is part of our ingrained-self finding manifestation; the things we encounter are linked with something inside of us in an inextricable way. So when you encounter someone who can witness your life in a way nobody else can, you start to feel your connection to God more tangibly. When the ingrained aspects of two beings are complimentary, that love-connection can be a joyous, fulfilling, passion-filled and uplifting experience, something analogous to soul mates meeting.

Of course, this can be greatly misinterpreted in the heat of first connection. We may think that we love someone who is very similar to us and who exhibits a similar ingrained-self. But really we only seek the validation that they can give us, because they can understand the things we are going through. We might only love someone because they speak the distorted truths about us that we are invested in, for example, that we are weak, needy or incapable. This can be a destructive type of connection to commit to, since there could be mutual stagnation since you are not uplifted by your partner. This connection starts to veer away from what love really is,

namely upliftment, and starts to be something that holds you back from spiritual evolution.

Being single is often very painful for people. They become fixated on the results which they believe love will bring to their lives. They may become invested in the idea of themselves as isolated, disconnected, and alone, and then when this investment becomes chronic they start to imagine that they are ‘destined to be alone’ and that they can never know what love is. It is obvious why this perception of being single can lead to unhappiness. You are becoming invested in a distorted image of yourself as not deserving something which is actually your deepest nature. These types of distortions can be seen as symptoms of the necessary illusion of disconnection: we have been placed in individual body-, mind-, emotionplaces, and we lose focus on the deeper truth of our connection because of this illusion of separation. We also suffer under many distortions of the idea of love, seeing it as something unattainable, as something that you need to be a certain type of person to earn, or as something difficult and far off. The most disabling of these distorted ideas is that romantic love in a particular form is the most valid and most important type of love. The tentacles of this delusion reach far and have caused much heartache. But the truth of the matter, as hard as it is to see past the distorted ideas we have become invested in, is that we can experience love at any time, with no conditions. And we are given so many opportunities to experience different and dynamic forms of love in our lives. There are many opportunities with people in our lives like our family members, friends, or other people we encounter, to start coming from a place of love. Even if we have been coming from another place before, we can start coming from a place of love in these relationships any time that we choose. At first, of course, it will be difficult to be loving with someone when the relationship has become cluttered with resentment and disappointment and anger. But the shift will come when we see these situations not as stagnant and beyond repair, but as opportunities to be loving.

And of course, there is the deepest love connection, the one that is ever present and ever witnessing and accepting and uplifting, the source of love overflowing: oneness, divinity, God, or spirit. Finding ways of experiencing and valuing this connection in our lives is one of the most basic and also one of the most profound ways to come from a place of love. Being able to express yourself unashamedly, be present, and trust, is a good place to start; the things you might do with friends or a partner, now you can do in the purest and deepest form. Connecting directly with the source of love is as simple as finding the love manifested in your life. It is as simple as knowing that whoever you are, you are already a part of the perfection of love.

A love connection is a great way to experience this divinity with another person. When you say 'I love you' to someone, you are really saying 'I see you, I am connected with you, I value you, and I trust you'. You are opening yourself up to the divinity and connection which this entails. And this connection is a reminder of godliness, and a way to experience your meaning in life.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × Do you have any ideas of what love should look like in your life, or any images of what it should do for you?
- × How does love offer you meaning in life?
- × How do you experience love in every part of your being?
- × How do you find ways to experience and express your deepest connection to love in your life? Are there possible ways that you can make this connection a greater part of your consciousness?

Ideas to reflect on: Illusions of ideal love; Passion; Being single; Soul mates; Divine love.



Many of us are inundated with images and ideas which relate to sex. Sex has come to be revered in almost all cultures, and it has come to be feared in many cultures as well. Children are sheltered from it almost above anything else; they are more likely to be allowed to see images of extreme and hateful violence rather than loving depictions of sex. Sex is often seen as a dirty word, and even talking about sex bluntly is an uncomfortable act for many. Many cultures try to sometimes forcefully determine the sexuality of individuals, especially women, through rituals and traditions which might even try to remove as much of their sexuality as possible. Sex is deified in certain religions, and made to only exist within very specific parameters which the particular religion dictates. It is used as a marketing tool in societies where images or ideas related to sex are able to grab attention. Many people are even exploited sexually in order to earn money.

What exactly is sex? What is it to be sexual? Sex is essentially a bodyplace experience of connection. It is the pleasurable experience of intimate physical engagement with another person, and of experiencing the connection of bodies in a way which can share pleasure. Sex also has strong links to the mindplace, since we process the physical stimulation through

frameworks which we have developed about sex. For example, we might enjoy a particular type of sex or a particular way of experiencing sex due to the way this interest has been formed in our mindplace. So both the bodyplace and mindplace, the two aspects of your being involved in the immediate experience of the world of things, are important in any sexual experience.

Sex could be another form of expressing love in a romantic relationship. The soulplace connection between partners might lead them to physical expression in the form of sex. They can experience their connection and commitment in another form through sexual engagement. It is, therefore, a way of mutual upliftment, and a way of experiencing passion-being in the bodyplace. All parties are engaged in bringing joy and pleasure to each other and themselves, so sex is a beautiful physical metaphor for the love connection which romantic partners might share.

In many cases, sex is a purely physical experience for people. The desire for sex might grow with changes in our biology, or we might encounter someone who fits the image of sexual attractiveness which we have formed in our mindplace, and we might develop sexual desire for them. In this case, the act of sex might simply be a release for these building energies. Sex also sometimes is a way to direct the raw energy of anger, and this is why many couples could have sex after a fight. The physical act requires some exertion, and the orgasm with the resulting pleasurable release of biological compounds in the body forms a type of release for many people. Physical release and physical pleasure could be great incentives for many forms of sex. The physical aspect could also become a lure for destructive forms of sex, where physicality comes to replace a deeper connection.

Sex could also be purely functional. It is a way for males and females of certain species, like our own, to procreate. Sometimes sex is the means to impregnation. For some people, this is the only reason why they choose to

engage in sex. They might see the act of sex as a sacred engagement, which indeed it can be, and they find their fulfilment in the functionality of sex. They might consider any other form of sexual contact to be non-sacred. Or, the enjoyment of the sexual experience could be divorced from the functionality of it for some people.

Sometimes, sex might also be a way of acting out of certain parts of our ingrained-self. If you hold destructive ideas about yourself, then destructive sex could be the way that you express those ideas. You could find a sense of control or attachment through the act of sex.

So sex is engaged in for many reasons, and has many different objectives. Sex becomes an exchange between people, and sometimes this exchange has different motivations for each party involved. Sexuality, however, is a personal issue. We have a personal view of sex, and personal likes and dislikes about sex. We can satisfy ourselves sexually through masturbation. We can have a completely different experience than our sexual partner even in the same encounter. Our relationship with sex is personal, regardless of why we choose to engage in sex. And sexuality, as with all other aspects of our being, evolves throughout our lifetime. We do not have the same relationship with the idea of sex at all points in our lives. We might develop new perspectives or sexual interests. Sexuality is a way of expressing and experiencing another aspect of your being, and often this is an aspect which is directed outside of yourself through the bodyplace and the mindplace.

Your sexuality also encompasses your sexual preference and your sexual identity. This is often very much determined by your ingrained-self and your biological makeup: you might identify as any of a number of labels, from straight to gay to bisexual to lesbian to transgendered to asexual and more. Your sexual identity is again formed in both your mindplace and your bodyplace, and this identification is not necessarily the same throughout your lifetime since these two parts of your being are constantly evolving. But in

most cases, your sexual identity is formed at a young age based on your ingrained-self. This is merely your way of experiencing sex, and is, as with many other aspects of your ingrained-self, formed because of the design of your individual soulplace when it enters the world of things. The key here is that your sexual identity might be determined to a large degree, but you are not merely passive in this process. You are able to experience and express this sexuality in any way you choose. What is important again is awareness, and being able to know and love every aspect of your sexuality. If your deepest nature is love and light, then bringing your sexuality into the light is an aspect of reaching for awareness.

Just like each of us has different passion-being, each of us has a different sexual being. We do not all enjoy the same amounts of sex, or the same kinds of sex, or we want different conditions around sex. Being aware of your sexual being is a way of understanding how you wish to engage with this form of expression. Some of us only enjoy sex with a single partner who we are married with, while others enjoy regular sex with multiple partners. Understanding your sexual identity, and approaching it responsibly, is also a part of reaching awareness.

Why do we have sexual desire? How does it relate to our godly nature? Sexual desire stems from the same place that any desire for experience and expression stems from: our soulplace. Sexuality is a part of our bodyplace and our mindplace, and exploring that sexuality is a way of reaching higher levels in these spheres. So sexual desire is absolutely a godly force. We are meant to be elevated in these spheres and to fulfil our sexual force.

What can happen is that we might become driven by that desire, as can happen with any desire, into dark parts of ourselves. Sometimes sex becomes so drowned in baggage that it reaches destructive levels. We might become addicted to sex, or we might engage in sex which is harmful to ourselves and others in a number of ways. Sex might also become tied to power in a relationship, where one partner uses it as a means of control over the other,

either by forcing sex on their partner or withholding it from them in order to gain footing in other areas of the relationship.

This is a dysfunction of sexuality. The reason why such a forceful word can be used is because these acts are so powerfully counter to our godly nature, since they misunderstand such a beautiful tool of our godly expression and experience. Functional sex is mutually satisfying, joyful and uplifting. Dysfunctional sex is destructive and might be solely results-driven, without appreciating the experience of sex. When you are having sex because of a destructive thought in your ingrained-self, every act of sex will be taking you further from your godly nature. When you are purely having sex out of anger, the anger might come to define sex for you, and this could lead to the emotional symptoms of anger also beginning to define sex. When you are having sex in order to assert your power over someone else, you are disrespecting the humanity of your sexual partner and are presenting a dark version of humanity to both yourself and your partner.

Is it the right thing to do to wait until marriage to have sex? Is it sinful to have sex before marriage? When sex is used for procreation and for forming a family, then it might be a better idea to enter that form of relationship when there is a strong level of commitment between partners. Sex before marriage is an individual decision, and you need to negotiate your ideas about it based on your own religious or cultural background, as well as what works for you in your life.

Essentially, sex has become an activity which requires a lot of responsibility. Unsafe sex could lead to sexually transmitted infections or unplanned pregnancies, and these things could drastically alter your life in ways that you might not be prepared for. Since sex has become tied to a high level of myth and fear in many societies, and could lead to these very real changes in life, it absolutely requires a level of maturity in order to be both satisfying and safe for both parties involved. Sex has also become tied to many emotional responses, and irresponsible sexual practices could lead to

negative responses in one or both parties involved. You could come to associate this negativity with sex, and find sex to be unpleasant in all future encounters, or engage in sex because of destructive thoughts.

Sex can also become a very selfish experience. Many people engage in sex with a partner who is not ready for the emotional or physical experiences which are tied to the act. There could also be a form of deception involved in order to get sexual satisfaction from a particular partner who is not readily consenting to the sexual encounter. When there is not dialogue and mutual upliftment involved, the act is not in alignment with godliness. The power, joy, love and connection of each person is not respected.

Many of us are frightened of sex. Many of our cultures have evolved to see sex in a particular version as the only correct form. Anything which deviates from this ideal version constitutes a perversion of sex. The problem is that sometimes these ideas of perversion might include our own godly expressions of sex, where the mutual upliftment of two consenting adults is viewed as ungodly, or where the safe sexual exploration of someone is deemed as wrong. Being able to see sex in a positive light is the only way to overcome these fears about sex. Being able to find love, joy, power and connection in your unique sexuality is reaching towards godliness.

Just like any form of upliftment, sex needs to be a means of dialogue, which respects the dignity of all parties involved. If you are engaging in a form of selfish sex, either on your part or that of your partner, it is not in alignment with your godly nature. If you are engaging in destructive sex, it is not in alignment with the objectives of upliftment.

Our fears about sex have manifest in deep-seated sexual dysfunctions which permeate our societies. Why is sexuality so repressed? Why do so many cultures fear speaking about, seeing or engaging with sexuality? This is because the bodyplace is the most direct and most tangible expression of our being, and in many ways we have become so invested in the world of things that we try to repress our full expression and experience of godly joy, power,

love and connection. We are frightened of that godliness when it can be so clearly demonstrated. We are frightened of experiencing our bodies since they are the most present aspects of our being, and engage most closely with the world of things. Physical nudity is likened to the exposure of every intimate part of our being, and is a type of honesty which contradicts our connection to the illusions of the world of things. Since the bodyplace is an aspect of our being which can be exposed to so much greater a degree than any other part, it is the part which makes us feel most vulnerable and also the most threatened. We constantly compare our bodies with the bodies of others, and judge physical attractiveness as a form of power. So modesty about our bodies is a way of hiding the fact that we might feel less powerful on the level of physical attractiveness. Physical vanity is demonised above any other type of vanity, because the physical is linked to sexual power. By enforcing modesty on others, we are quieting their own sexual power. By quelling the flame of desire in everyone, and by making people feel ashamed of their sexuality, we are protecting our own insecurities about our desirability, and disempowering the expression and experience of others. So the bodyplace, this most exposable aspect of our being, is forced into modesty because the directness of sexual power and physical presence is frightening. We have all been affected by this sexual repression, and recognising the impact of it in your own life could lead you towards your sexual awakening.

Our sexual responsibility is no different from any responsibility we have in life: to ensure the upliftment of all parties involved, and to maintain dialogue. When we have unsafe sex, we are acting counter to our deepest nature, which is health and wellbeing, since these are the conditions of experiencing the height of our passion-being. Finding ways to enjoy sex and to have responsible sex are a part of experiencing and expressing your godliness.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What are some of your feelings about your bodyplace as a sexual place in your being? How do you feel about your own attractiveness?
- × What is your sexuality, and what types of sex give you the most pleasure and joy?
- × What are some of your fears about sex? How have societal values shaped your attitude towards sex?

Ideas to reflect on: Destructive sex; Responsible sex; Sexuality; Fear of the bodyplace.

Finding Joy

Joy is a characteristic of your highest self. It is found in the interaction with the world of things, when you can find beauty, pleasure and infusion from your surroundings. This is a part of your godliness, because you are one of the co-creators of the world of things, and you are tied to the infinite creator: the fullness of God. So when you can engage with the splendour and wonder of creation in the world of things, and you can find a reflection of your godliness in that, you are in a space of joy.

Joy is different from happiness. This is because joy does not emanate from your emotionplace, but is a soulplace state of being in relation to the world of things. This explains the contradiction that you can be sad but still joyful. You might have circumstances in your life which bring about sadness, but you can still come from a place of joy within these moments. You can still see the perfection of creation, and the wonder of the world, and still experience beauty, pleasure and be fuelled by the world of things, even when your surroundings are challenging. Coming from a place of joy is looking behind, beyond, around and through the illusions of life, and finding the perfection of design in everything.

Joy can be discovered in every aspect of your being. Your bodyplace could experience joy in the beautiful moment of sharing loving sex, in bringing about creative works which demonstrate the beauty of creation, or in the pleasure of sport and play. Your mindplace could find joy in conversation, gaining knowledge, and in creativity. Your emotionplace could be joyful through gratitude and through feelings of happiness and excitement around the things you encounter. And your soulplace is joyful when you remember and practice your connection to god through prayer, meditation, or engaging with your own godliness.

Finding joy in life is another way of experiencing and expressing your godliness. Joy could come from your passion-being, from physical and mental pleasure, or from experiencing connection in nature or with other people. So joy happens when you are in alignment with your highest self, and when you can bring this perspective to your interactions with the world of things. When this happens, you can find beauty, pleasure, and the infusion of godliness in these interactions.

Joy will also flow from service or work which is in alignment with upliftment. When you do things to demonstrate the beauty of the world or which bring pleasure to others and infuse godliness into them, you are spreading joy into your surroundings. And these acts are often joyful for you as well, since you begin to raise the world to a higher state of being. You can also infuse joy into responsibilities and commitments in your life by making them godly acts. So, whichever commitments you have chosen to make can become symbols of godliness when you can find the beauty in them, or take pleasure from them, or be fuelled by them. Making joy a part of your everyday life is being able to elevate every aspect of your life to godliness. When you are being your highest self, you are finding ways to make the different aspects of your life joyful. This could mean that you need to move away from aspects which constantly drain the joy from your life. So if a particular part of your life makes you forget the beauty around you, or is not

pleasurable, and does not infuse you with godliness, finding joy is reworking these aspects so that they are in alignment with joy, or moving away from them.

Of course, we are not always joyful in every activity or situation. We do not always have the chance to make every one of our responsibilities into joyful experiences. But we do always have the power to find joy in some form in our everyday lives. When you can find joy in isolated parts of your life, you through that we can begin to find it in all parts of your life. Joy will lead you to a more intimate relationship with the world of things, one where you can understand the godliness of every experience which you have and in every person that you meet. Beginning to find joy in small ways will lead you to finding it more broadly.

You need to be able to recognise beauty in order to experience joy. Beauty is when you can experience the magnificence of design in something within the world of things, or in your own life. It is when you can look at a product of creativity and see the wonder and godliness behind it. Beauty is when you can be in awe of something which seems to connect with godliness, and which reminds you of the godliness of life. This could be natural beauty which you might find in a park or at the ocean, as well as the beauty of the people in your life and of creative works. Beauty is that characteristic of something we perceive which elevates it from our surroundings, and makes it a symbol of wonder in our lives.

We do not all perceive beauty in the same way. This has a lot to do with our ingrained-self, which determines the way we perceive. But also, our perception of beauty develops in line with our unique experiences in life. When you find the form of beauty that speaks to you, cherishing and appreciating that beauty will lead you to joy. We can find the beauty in things which we might take for granted in life, and understand the godliness and wonder behind what we might consider to be ordinary things in life. When we look closely, we can see the miracle of design in everything we

perceive. Appreciating the beauty in your life could be as simple as looking out of your window and noticing the miracles all around you. Appreciating beauty could be watching your child play, and seeing the godliness in that moment.

A big part of finding joy is honesty. This is because honesty allows us to be fully present in an experience, and in that way we can perceive the godliness in everything more clearly. Dishonesty might limit our experience of joy, since we might be hiding from our true passion-being, or our true ideas of beauty, or our true forms of godly pleasure in life. We might begin to substitute real joy for the aspects of our bodyplace, mindplace or emotionplace which resemble joy. So you might begin to see destructive sex as a form of substituting joy. You might begin to see your own pride and flaunting your superior knowledge as a substitute for the joys of learning and sharing knowledge. You might see momentary happiness and euphoria as substitutes for deeper joy. Honesty is when you can see the aspects of your ingrained-self which are leading you to substitute destruction or the illusions of the world of things for godly joy. It will allow you to celebrate your joy in the world of things, instead of hiding it from other people due to fear or insecurity. So being honest about what makes you joyful, and being honest with yourself about your ingrained barriers to joy, are important steps in finding joy in life. You cannot find your deepest truth if you are not living your worldly truth, because living outside of yourself is a barrier to the state of awakening.

Being infused by the world of things is also an important part of joy. When we can take pleasure from our experiences and see the beauty around us, we start to feel the presence of godliness more powerfully in our own lives. The world of things begins to resemble godliness more closely, and we can take power, light and love from it. Every experience of joy makes us more capable to spread joy, and to reach higher levels of being in our lives. We become enlightened by joy, and can spread light through joy. So joy will

fill you with the power to bring about beauty and pleasure in your own life as well as the lives of others.

Finding joy is an act of reaching for godliness. When you are conscious of what makes you joyful, and you discover joy in your life, you are moving closer to your highest self.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What is your idea of beauty? Which parts of the world of things do you recognise as wondrous and beautiful?
- × What brings you the greatest pleasure in life?
- × Which aspects of your truth are you resisting, in subtle or larger ways? Is this resistance holding you back from joy?

Ideas to reflect on: Pleasure; Beauty; Infusion of godliness from the world of things; Honesty.

Recap of Part II

When you have gained new understandings about yourself, often these understandings are unsettled by factors from the outside. You change jobs, start a new relationship, or simply have a bad day, and all of your resolve and understanding can be put aside to deal with what you are encountering. Your relationship to external factors involves many different aspects, and you come from many different parts of your being when dealing with these aspects. Part II provides tools for thinking about these interactions, and works towards reaching a strategy for engaging with the world of things. Maintaining your sense of self in the face of changing external factors is the only way of reaching awakening.

Part II begins by asking what the best way is to deal with other people. You are an example of humanity to everyone who comes into contact with you. A part of your responsibility is presenting the face of godliness to the world, and reaching towards your highest self when engaging with others. This means treating everyone with a sense of dignity. Your life should give others permission to be human, and then inspire them to be godly. Of course, this does not mean condoning those who do not act out of godliness, since even through this inaction when injustices occur you are presenting a vision of humanity which allows for destruction, violence or oppression to continue.

A part of your responsibility is also uplifting those who you come into contact with through your own form of service. The three objectiveness of

upliftment are to remind people of their godly nature, to provide them with tools to determine their own lives, and to allow them to live in dignity. If your form of service is in alignment with these objectives, you are spreading godliness to other people. Of course, service also means making sure that every aspect of the world of things is a reflection of the highest godliness. So power, beauty, freedom, joy and connection need to be present in nature and in animals as well. How you interpret respecting the wonders of the world and being of service to these wonders needs to form part of your own version of service. The upliftment of all life and creation is a part of your highest calling. This form of service will be dealt with in more detail in Part III.

Many of us are called to work in the world of things. We could do this in order to earn money or possessions, or in order to exercise our connection to the world of things and to other people. Our work comes to define us to a large degree. When we can align our work with our highest self, we can find amazing levels of expression and experience through it.

Our money and possessions can be very challenging aspects of our lives. We can become attached to the things in our lives and to the illusions of power which they afford us. But they can also be powerful tools for exercising our godliness in the world, and surrounding ourselves with beauty, light and love. Finding a positive perception and a positive way of handling our money and possessions can lead us to use these tools for upliftment.

We can become attached to particular possessions, and we can become attached to particular emotional states. When we can recognise this as an overinvestment in the world of things, we can move into higher levels of godliness. This is a part of growing up. We can become stuck at a certain point of our evolution, and growing up is looking further than that and moving towards higher levels of experience and expression. Growing up also involves finding new levels of commitment and responsibility in life, both to ourselves and the world of things. Growing up is making every aspect of our

being an extension of our godliness, and then dedicating ourselves to uplifting those people and things that surround us.

Sometimes, even when we have a good relationship with all of these factors and we are on a path of growth in our lives, we are confronted by tragedies and difficulties which we could never have anticipated. When you are struck by the uncertainties of life, your commitment to the upliftment of yourself and others might suffer. You could forget your godliness, and struggle to find the path back to it. You might begin to find yourself being defined by this event. A powerful way to move back into light and love is to fall into grace and to surrender to the situations which we are confronted by. The ideas of grace and surrender will be discussed in detail in Part III.

When we are reminded of our lack of control over every aspect of our lives, we are filled with the energy of anger. Anger is when we are exposed to the fissure between our godly and worldly self, when we remember that we are not able to limitlessly change the conditions of our lives and the world in an instant, and when we find that things in our lives are not going as we would like. Our lack of control over the decisions of other people is very often a source of anger. You can react to anger in a number of ways. It could lead to violence or negative feelings, giving you a sense of justice as you might feel wronged by the world, other people, or by God. Or it can be channelled into release and even used for creativity. We can redirect the anger to positively address an injustice, and move it into upliftment.

The final few chapters of Part II deal with three more important aspects of our relationship with the world of things: love, sex, and joy.

Love is the deepest connection between all people, and defines our true nature. We are all a part of the fullness and completion of love, which is our soulplace. We often find this love reflected in the world of things through the close connections we form with family, romantic partners or friends. But love easily becomes confused within other discourses such as attraction, gender dynamics and popular images of what love should look like. Behind

the feelings which these discourses might bring about in the emotionplace, there is still the purity of love in that deepest connection. Love and our loved ones can offer us meaning in life. We demonstrate our love connections in the world of things through many different displays, such as conversation, witnessing, and sex.

Sex has become a very important aspect of demonstrating our romantic love-connections. This is because our societies have placed many restrictions and fears around the idea of sex. Since the bodyplace is the most direct form of our being in terms of experience and expression, when we become overinvested in the world of things we become frightened of this extreme exposure of this aspect of our being. We try to limit the expression and experience of the body, especially when the body demonstrates a love-connection and points to its highest truth. We become ashamed of our bodies due to our investment in the idea that sexual attractiveness is a form of power which should be oppressed. These factors have led to many forms of sexual dysfunction in our societies. But sexual expression is a beautiful form of demonstrating our love and godliness to one another. Sexual pleasure is a way of reaching towards joy in our bodyplace and mindplace.

The final chapter of Part II deals with finding joy. Joy is when you can derive pleasure, notice beauty, and be infused with godliness through your interactions with the world of things. Joy is a characteristic of your highest self, and moving into joy is opening yourself up to new levels of godliness in your life. You can find joy in every aspect of your being, and you can make it a part of your everyday life. A big part of joy is honesty, since this allows us to bring ourselves to situations fully.

In Part III, the conversation turns to your connection with godliness. The big questions which inform your spirituality will be tackled, especially the meaning of life. Once you have clarified your relationship with yourself and the world of things, thinking about the aspects of your godliness in more detail can serve to align all of the parts of your being with your highest truth.

Things to think about before Part III

You might want to solidify the understandings you have reached throughout Part II before moving on to Part III. These questions might help you to do this:

- × What has been the most resonant idea or the most profound understanding which you have discovered through the meditations in Part II?
- × What has been the most challenging aspect of working through Part II?
- × Try to answer this question as fully as you can now: What is your relationship with the world?
- × Are there any particular questions which you hope Part III might help you to address?



Part Three

The Meaning of Life

Untangling Meaning

and Making Life Meaningful

What is the meaning of life? The answer to that question, in itself, needs to be rather miraculous. It needs to accomplish the task of reaching the highest truth, and at the same time needs to satisfy the longing, desire and confusion of so many people. It needs to really be the answer to every question ever asked. The answer needs to at once make us feel whole and have complete clarity on our direction and our origins. Or else, it will not be meaningful for each of us. It will not help us to feel a sense of purpose or to have guidance in our lives. Is it even possible to answer this question?

This question could mean different things to different people. The meaning of life could be the reason behind why we were created, why the Universe exists, and even why God exists. It could be a question of what is good or evil, right or wrong: what are we meant to do in life? It could also speak about the purpose which you, in your individuality, find in life. How do you answer a question like this?

There have, of course, been many attempts to answer this question. Some hold that we are meant to please our creator and serve Him, and offer

ourselves to godliness. This answer could satisfy all of the levels which this question might entail, since we were created for service, the right thing to do is to live in service, and individual purpose is measured by the amount or quality of devotion to godliness which the individual undertakes. This is one of the possible answers to the question which resonates with a lot of people. But it also leads to more questions: Why would a perfect God need incomplete humans to serve him? Are only humans meant to be called to service, and if so, what is the purpose of the rest of creation?

The life of service is absolutely a part of the meaning of life, because it constitutes the upliftment of godliness in all people. When we find joy and are grateful, we are engaging in a form of reverence for the godliness all around us. The basic premise of many religions is to be reverent and to live in service, and indeed these are a part of the meaning of life.

What begins to complicate this view of meaning is that it might have a particular view of God which is personified in this equation. In other words, God is made to seem like a human. If God were viewed as similar to humanity, he would necessarily be incomplete, since he would have human-like characteristics such as anger, fear, confusion, or desire. This is a God who can be disappointed in us, or who can exercise rage against us. This is, therefore, a God who is not the perfection of love in every moment. And these anthropocentric views of God would create confusion around the idea of service: we might not be living our lives in the right way to serve him. We might make mistakes that He would hold a grudge against us for making. We might misinterpret the messages from this God, and suffer the consequences of his wrath. So, contradictions in our holy texts might cause half of us to be damned and the other half saved if we differ in our interpretations. We might refer to God with masculine pronouns and think of Him through the stereotypes or prejudices of masculinity which we have developed in the world of things.

This view of God is necessarily inadequate, since it does not acknowledge the fullness of love which characterises Her. She is not thrust into the world of things as an individual like we are, so she does not have a singular bodyplace, mindplace or emotionplace. In this way, She cannot be masculine or feminine. She cannot be hindered by the constraints of time and space, because perfect love is found in the soulplace. This means that God is omnipresent and omnipotent, as many philosophies hold. God can do anything and be anywhere. She can also know anything. So if God already knows every part of your deepest truth, and every aspect of the life you are slowly experiencing, how can God be disappointed in you? How can God be vengeful towards you for something She knows that you have already done and already will do at the moment of your birth? So God is much less an individual being, and much more a state of being. God is much less a separate and mysterious benefactor, and much more a part of every single moment and of every single one of us. In this way, we are all the perfection of love all the time. This is our highest truth, which we can reach back to at any time. We are simply experiencing this through the incompleteness of our worldly beings and the necessary illusions of time, space, fear, uncertainty and anger. But every day we can experience our true nature of love, power, beauty, connection and joy.

The view of the meaning of life as service to godliness is one which informs the lives of many effective individuals, but also one which can lead to much dysfunction when the God you are meant to serve is impossible to satisfy. The reason for this existence is thus to find and be in godliness, and to uplift the godliness in others and in the world of things. While we live within the parameters of time and space, we are reaching back to the godliness which characterises our true nature.

Another answer to the question of the meaning of life is that we are here to express and experience. Since God is perfection, He has nothing to compare Himself to, and in that way the only way for Him to understand

Himself is through the modes of expression and experience. We were placed here as vessels of godliness to experience the fullness of creation through the world of things. We were made into beings that can create and develop. We were purposefully made to be incomplete so that we could reach towards godliness. The meaning of life is to experience the fullness of life, and the individuality of each person, in order to more fully understand godliness. So we are here to be here, and we are here to be ourselves as fully as possible. This view of the meaning of life celebrates individuality. Your own flavour of expressing and experiencing life is very important here. You need to discover yourself so that you can be more of yourself, or reach higher levels of what makes you unique. This is where passion-being and finding joy come in. You need to be the unique and beautiful being that you are, and to explore yourself and the experiences your soul creates.

This view, as well, comes with potholes. Is it okay to live a hedonistic life? Is there no sense of right and wrong if we are simply meant to experience as much as we can? Should we feel no guilt or remorse for any of our actions in life if they are all simply a part of godliness experiencing itself?

While we are individuals in this world, a part of our being is also our soulplace, which is our love-connection with all other people and things. Upliftment is a part of experiencing our own godliness as well, since it is a way of seeing the godliness in all things and validating the beauty we are surrounded by, as well as practicing our power to impact on the world. When we are doing things which are not in alignment with upliftment, we are living outside of ourselves. Our emotional responses are there to show us whether or not we are living in alignment with godliness, so ignoring them might lead us further from this path. While we are here to express and experience, we are also here to be examples of godliness to one another.

Another possible answer to the question of the meaning of life is simply that there is no meaning. Some people believe that we are simply the result of

a series of random occurrences in natural processes, where our Universe developed out of chance rather than design, and where things are headed nowhere in particular, and that it really does not matter what we do in life because there are no esoteric consequences. Sometimes this view of the Universe can be very useful and effective, since if you subscribe to it, you could look purely at what is functional and what is not, and choose to cut out the latter since it is not leading to the betterment of mankind. This view does not negate any of the deeper levels of being, and many people who do not believe in God or higher purpose, lead wonderfully generous and godly lives. Your beliefs and understandings, thus, are not always indicators of your level of development or grace in life.

So the meaning of life could be a question which has deep implications for your being, or one which simply does not matter that much to you. The 'real' answer to this question is always the one which leads you to your highest godliness, and that is why the meaning was not clearly and irrevocably spelled out for us. We are making this meaning. A big part of our meaning in life is to discover something which we find meaningful and to nurture it. We need to make our own life meaningful. Many people find this meaning in religion, or in their families and relationships, or in their careers. But behind that you need to find those guiding principles which lead you to live a life fuelled by joy, beauty, power and love, which is the definition of godliness.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × How do you define God? Is the idea of God useful to your spiritual understanding?
- × What makes your life meaningful?
- × What do you see as the meaning of life? Do you subscribe to any one particular meaning?

Ideas to reflect on: Service to godliness; Expression and experience; Meaningless existence; Making your own meaning.



Here, Now

Presence is the state of living in awakening, and fully experiencing the here and now. Since experience and expression are a part of spiritwork, presence is a necessary ingredient in order to fulfil these aspects of our relationship with the world of things, and to reach towards higher levels of being. Presence is full consciousness of your experiences. When you have reached awakening within a particular moment, presence is the act of maintaining that awakening throughout an experience, and of being the fullness of yourself within every moment. It is not thinking about reaching the end of a particular task, but instead relishing every part of the journey. It is the slowing down of your processes until you can see them as processes, and not simply as obstacles to completion. It is staying with yourself; not yourself ten minutes or ten years ago, and not yourself ten minutes or ten years from now, but yourself in every moment. The self you are, here and now, which is both incomplete and a part of the perfection of power, joy, beauty, love and connection. It is connecting with the language of your body. Presence is seeing behind your eyes and experiencing yourself as the consciousness behind your thoughts, actions, body and experiences, instead of equating yourself with these markers. You are deeper than your thoughts,

and you are bigger than your body. Presence is looking at a situation which your mind or body is overwhelmed by, and realising that it is exactly where you are meant to be. It is realising that you are more than your situation, and relishing the beauty in every situation. It is divine, unmediated, unabashed consciousness of your connection to all things. Presence is when you allow your feelings to be, no matter what they are. It is when you can look at situations as they truly are. It is when you realise that you are feeding your ego at times, or feeding your soul at times.

Presence is when you are passionate and in-tune, and when you can smell, see, hear, touch, taste and feel the godliness that you are. Presence is being yourself without fear and reservation. It is taking yourself less seriously, and smiling. It is the capitulation and surrender to joy. Presence is trust that there is divinity, purpose, meaning, truth and heart in every moment of your life, and that every moment is worth celebrating because it is a part of the one great moment of finality and fullness. Presence is opening yourself up to yourself, others, and godliness, being powerful and powerless, determining and being determined. Presence is when you let go of your need to constantly be in control, when you can trust that you are good enough, and when you dive in instead of relentlessly fearing the state of the water. It is when you love, heal, feel inspired, give and take, when you are quiet with yourself and quiet with others and godliness. Presence is here, now.

When you can live in presence, you can engage with the highest truth in everything you undertake in life. This is because you will be able to face your insecurities, fears and anger when they arise, and look at them with consciousness. And when you take action out of consciousness, you can express godliness. Presence is more than simply being focused. It is bringing your entire being to a moment, and coming from a place of godliness in every engagement.

We fall out of presence when we begin to live outside of ourselves, and when we have future- or past-oriented perceptions. We might become

worried, flustered, distracted, bored, embarrassed, or frightened within a particular moment, and these factors can take us out of the moment. We start to find our energy divided, and often this can affect our perception of our experiences. We could fail to see certain aspects of our experiences, or we could find ourselves feeling powerless and incapable. Moving back into presence in these moments is again shifting all of our energy into the moment, and accepting the different reactions of different parts of our being. But then, when we are conscious of a moment, we can again seek for the godly reaction to our particular situation.

This might not necessarily be the reaction which other people think is godly. Sometimes, the most constructive thing we can do is simply to remove ourselves from certain situations, since they are doing no good for us and we are doing no good while we are in them. Sometimes reaching back to presence while we are confronted by the source of living outside of ourselves is impossible. We might not be able to see godliness at all. If we can remove ourselves from these situations and find presence again, we can reassess what the godly reaction is.

So, if awakening is remembering ourselves and coming back to incompleteness, then presence is bringing our full being into that moment of remembering. It is the next step in awakening, and only once you can understand all of the sources of fear, anger, joy and passion-being in your life can you be fully conscious in every moment. When you awaken to a moment and can be conscious of every aspect of your being in that moment, you can have the fullness of experience and expression. You can taste more vividly and relish every morsel of your food. You can see details as well as the big picture with newfound clarity. You can connect with others more powerfully. You can tap into intuition and creativity that you have never experienced before. This is because your self-awareness and your awakening have been reinforced by your commitment to bring your full being to every moment.

A necessary part of presence is patience. This is the acceptance and appreciation of your temporal state, and for the slow process of development. You are handing yourself over to the moment, a capitulation which allows you to broaden your experience and increase the power of your upliftment. You are aligning every part of your being, instead of having your energies divided. You are able to be less distracted and more in-tune with your life.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What makes it difficult for you to be present within particular situations? Are there particular situations where you become distracted, nervous, bored or upset to the point where you do not act out of your godliness, or fully experience that moment?
- × Practice being present to moments in your life. For one minute, bring your full consciousness to a particular activity. Pay close attention to where you are, and immerse yourself in a situation. How does this state of presence affect you?

Ideas to reflect on: Bringing your full being to a moment.

Goals, Dreams and a State of Ambition

We all have dreams in life. We all have things that we would like to experience or have. And most of us, at one point or another, have probably had the thought that if we only had that one experience or thing, if we were only rich or famous or could change certain things about ourselves, we would be happy and fulfilled. We tend to dream bigger when we are younger, when we are not fazed by the fears and illusions that things are impossible for us. And as we grow older, many of us feel like we have compromised on our dreams, and we gradually lose ambition in life and settle into the disappointment that we will probably never have what we dreamed of having. Sometimes dreams come true, and people get everything they have ever wished for. Sometimes the fulfilment of these dreams can be extremely beautiful and joyful and miraculous. We can get anything we want, and when it happens, we can understand it as an expression of godliness and truth. Dreams can be extremely positive things in people lives, and lead those who feel relatively disadvantaged to places where they feel empowered. But

sometimes, we have the same illusions about dreams that we do about love, that somehow, when we achieve those things, we will be complete and we will not have to struggle with our humanity anymore. We imagine that results will bring us closer to godliness. We imagine that when the results do not come, it means that we are doing something wrong and are not 'good' enough, so we do not deserve the good things we dream for.

There is so much that is wonderful in the state of ambition. Having goals and dreams is a form of commitment to your passion-being. You are making a statement about your hopes, about your intention for life, and about your purpose, passion, and the deepest truth about yourself. You are opening yourself up to the creativity and possibilities which dreams and goals have. When you have a passion for farming, and you find ways of expressing that passion, and you feel the fulfilment of every moment of being involved in the thing you love to do, you are living in a state of passion-being. When your ambitions flow from this, like a dream to own a farm of your own, and you see this dream slowly taking shape, you are living in a state of ambition. You are cherishing the passion-being and finding ways of expressing it on a new and higher level.

What prevents most goals and dreams from being continuously fulfilling for people, and from even being realised in many cases, is living for the future or the past of those things. Ambition is an evolving state of being, and one that interacts and changes in your surroundings. It is not something static that brings completion when it is reached, but it grows out of itself and becomes a way of life. That is why results are not the end for people who live in a state of ambition, but the ambition for them is the way they commit to their passion-being. Ambition is a state of being. It is a state of dynamism and excitement at the possibilities of life, and being invested in growth, development and experiencing newness and joy. When ambition comes from this state of being and feeds into your passion-being, you will not be results-driven anymore. This is not saying that you will not think of results and will

not have dreams about the things you would like. But you will not base your ambition solely in the future or the past. You will not be waiting for something to happen in order for your ambition to be fulfilled. You will not be waiting for some future date to get your ambition started, and if a certain result is not achieved, your state of ambition will not be undone. The state of being present in your ambition and in the activities which express that ambition will be your fulfilment. Coming from this state of being means not being frustrated that results are slow. It means not basing your idea of yourself on your surroundings or what you have achieved or attained, because you are already living in your passion-being. This is a state where your goals are not fed by your ego. Your goals are instead fed by your passion-being, in the quest of reaching higher states of passion-being, and developing all people around you in this regard.

The most important distinction here is between ambition as a state of being, and ambition as a results-driven and future-oriented concept based on distorted ideas about yourself. The former is one in alignment with the truth about yourself, where you can experience your godliness without any conditions attached to it. The latter is the idea that you need to have done something, own something or be with a specific kind of person in order to be fulfilled. It is a state of wanting. In the former, you are already full, and the state of ambition is the desire to know, understand, experience and express that fullness in new and higher ways.

Now for the hard questions: Does this mean you should give up on your ideas of being famous, rich, crazy in love, blissful and spiritually alive somewhere in the future if you do not have those things right now? Does this mean that you should not have social goals which you see as bringing about the best for all people somewhere in the future? This is tricky, because often these types of 'goals' are so grounded in our illusions about the world and ourselves that we are negating our very state of ambition by reaching for them. This sounds like a contradiction, but you can limit your state of

ambition by having goals which flow from places which are not in alignment with your highest truth. So, if you base your goals on thoughts that you are not good enough, that you need to prove something to others through your accomplishments, or that you are resentful of the place you are in right now, then you are working against your highest truth. You are no longer living in your passion-being, but instead you are going after a potential future passion-being which you think will be brought about by these goals and dreams. And even when the results do come, you will find that you are then further from your passion-being and your godliness than you have ever been. But these things in themselves, the results which sometimes come from living in your state of ambition, are not bad things to want or to have. However, reaching for these things as goals in themselves probably does not speak about your highest truth, but instead speaks about distorted ideas you hold about yourself, and your fears of your own incompleteness.

Your real state of ambition reaches towards higher levels of godliness and passion-being, but does not rely on something external to happen before godliness and passion-being are a part of your life.

In addition, social goals could also fall into these two categories: those you do for your ego, and those you do so that you can uplift other people to their own development. Often it is not easy to distinguish them, and both of these can overlap in the same activity, which is also not completely negative. When you are aware of how your ingrained-self is operating in every goal you undertake, then you are reaching for awakening. There will probably always be a part of your ego operating in any activity, and being conscious of that is a part of your spiritwork. So, there are definitely some goals which are mostly based on power, on enforcing beliefs, on making yourself feel better about your life, on feeling productive and useful, and on quick-fix results that might stunt self-actualisation. It is extremely useful to recognise when you are falling into this type of action, and to see the parts of yourself that are being fed by your social presence. And then to be present to that for a while,

and look closely at yourself in that ego-fuelled goal. Often the goal in principle is a noble one, like feeding the hungry or spreading awareness, but when your ego is tied into it, there is a much higher chance of disappointment when you realise that the things you were trying to work towards by your actions are still unfinished. You might start to resent the goal you have undertaken, and it could become an obstacle to finding joy in your experiences.

Once you are aware of these factors, you can move from there, and be a social presence for the upliftment of all people. You need to remember that your social goals can also be a part of your passion-being, and do not need to be a chore or a charity. You are expressing parts of the truth, connection and love between all people with these goals, and remembering this fact will help you stay level-headed when things do not go according to plan.

Wanting to be comfortable and have material things is normal, and these things can be great tools for the expression of your passion-being. But when these tools, in your mind, become necessary for even the most basic practice of your passion-being, you are confusing a state of ambition with a desire for results and possession. When a child grows up without proper stationary and wants to be a writer, he might have the goal of obtaining better tools to practice his craft. He might be very excited about the possibility of this, and live in that state of ambition for reaching higher levels in that sphere. Then, when he has new stationary, he might aspire to own a computer and learn how to type. These types of goals come from the creative, expressive state of being which is called ambition. But, this child can still make up stories and tell them to his friends even if he does not get that stationary. He can still find ways of expressing his passion-being which do not rely on him having a computer in order to live his passion. Even if this child never has his computer, he has lived in his passion-being, and his ambitions were in alignment with the truest part of himself: his love and

passion for storytelling. His life was not fuelled by the frustration and resentment of not having what he wanted.

This story could have gone a very different way. When these goals start to reflect some distorted idea about the child, he could start to move out of a state of ambition, which is a state where goals are fuelled by the calling to reflect passion-being on higher ways. He might move into the state of thinking of himself in terms of 'not enough', and of needing things and results to be complete.

Sometimes, the goals can become more important than the life you are living right now, right here, and ironically, the way you approach your goals can actually be the fuel for the negation of your ambition and prevent you from ever reaching any of those goals. The child in this story might experience one disappointment, like his story being rejected from a school newspaper, and feel like this reflects the idea of him as 'not enough'. He might not want to try writing again, because he could get more negative results, and this will reflect a negative image of himself. He is not writing from his passion for writing, and he is not basing his goals on the writing itself. But instead he bases his goals on the circumstances surrounding the writing, and the fact that he is not getting the results he wants.

More important than your desires in life is the state of coming from a place of godliness in your being, and expressing parts of yourself that are in alignment with what is the truest about you. The parts of you that you bring to any activity are more important than whether or not you have had the experience you imagined you would have, or whether you have achieved the material results which you had hoped for. This does not mean that you should resist having hopes and dreams, but rather the results which you experience should be secondary to the parts of your being which you bring to situations. When you know that farming or writing is your passion, and speaks of your highest truth, you can live in that passion, even when you experience unfavourable results. If you cannot live in that passion all the time

because it is impractical for your physical needs in life, then you can live in it some of the time. If you are coming from a loving place, a place of ambition and passion, finding time for your passion will be like finding oxygen for your soul to breathe. Your goals will flow out of this, and your passion will be fulfilling. And you will probably find yourself ‘achieving’ a lot more, spiritually, instead of being frustrated about what you perceive as lack in your life.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × How have you based your ambitions on results in the past? How has the fact that those results did not come about affect your ambition?
- × What types of goals and dreams do you have for expanding your experience and expressing your passion-being?
- × Are you waiting for certain conditions to be present before experiencing your passion-being right now, or are you living in passion-being?

Ideas to reflect on: Ambition as a state of being; Results-driven ambition.



There is something essentially uplifting, creative and beautiful about courage, and it aligns us more with what is bigger than us. Courage is more than a reaction to a situation. It is a way of living, a way of approaching life which handles difficult situations with power, but also powerfully expresses itself through a commitment to passion-being and upliftment. The courageous life is a life which looks at the challenges and difficulties of the world of things, and looks at the limitations of humanity, but chooses for godliness nonetheless.

Living recklessly is necessarily un-courageous. Thoughtlessness can never be considered a courageous life. This is because disregard and destructiveness is essentially opposed to your passion-being. Your passion-being is concerned with creation, life, renewal, and togetherness. So any behaviours, thought-patterns and feelings that contradict those things are not a part of your highest self. That is why destructive patterns of eating, sex, substance abuse, and destructive thoughts of resentment, regret, or self-loathing can never be motivations for courage. Extreme actions which try to remedy old destructive behaviours are also not courageous, because usually they are short-lived, impulsive, and destructive in themselves. When you try

to counter your weight issues with a crash diet, you are not taking a courageous course. You are taking an easy, quick-fix route to reach the results that you want, without confronting the reasons why you are overweight in the first place. Retaliation is also not a courageous course. When someone has hurt you, and you react by hurting them back, you are not reaching for your highest self in that moment. You are teaching yourself of a humanity which is hurtful, and you are blocking the connection to that person and closing off possibilities of love. In the same breath, stagnation with destructive behaviour is also a way of distancing yourself from your highest self. When you simply continue to overeat, or you allow someone to constantly abuse you without standing up for yourself, you are falling into destructive patterns. So how then does courage take place? How do you align yourself with your highest self courageously if not through these radical actions or behavioural changes?

In themselves, radical actions are not necessarily uncourageous. But they do usually involve such a drastic change that you bypass your godliness and fall straight into action. Ideally, the two should be aligned, and your godliness should be considered in the new actions, instead of only considering the results which you seek. When your passion-being is found in the act of singing, and you have a goal of singing in front of an audience, you can align yourself with the godliness of that dream and see it as a way that you can experience and express yourself on higher levels. You might have fears based on the fact that you have never sang in front of people before, but because you are aligned with the godliness of this dream, you look at those fears through courage. When you do finally take a chance and sing at your local theatre, you are fuelling the act with courage, which is the desire to experience higher levels of your being despite your ingrained fears and insecurities. Taking this action, which is difficult for you to take, is acting out of a space of courage.

However, if you simply act out of a desire for results, and when you are acting outside of yourself, you are not acting courageously. When you start running for two hours every day when you have not done any exercise before, and you base the exercise on the thought that you hate the way you look and you resent your current position in life, you are acting outside of yourself. You are aligning your action with an image that you want to achieve, instead of your own godliness and your highest self. You might come home after every run, look at yourself in the mirror, and resent the fact that you are still not losing weight. You hate every second of running, because it is not the way your individual bodyplace finds passion in exercise. Very often, the new behaviour is not sustainable.

Is there ever a situation when doing something courageous does not feel good? Is there ever a situation where courage involves living outside of your passion-being, being destructive, or being made to feel and experience horror, but knowing that you are doing it for the right results?

A misinterpretation of your passion-being is that it always aligns with happiness. Real courage, often, is frightening. When every step you take towards the courageous act causes the fearful part of yourself to want to turn around, think of ways out, and find routes around the courageous act, it is a good measure of real courage. The difference is when every step of the way makes you feel resentful, hateful, bored, and decidedly unhappy. Even though you are taking action which could be considered as ‘for the greater good’, the greatest good is you and everyone else living in your passion-being and being an example of godliness. So the courage of reaching a certain result is negated by the approach to that result.

An even bigger misinterpretation is that other people will be able to define your action as courageous when it is happening. Most people will not even know that an act is courageous for you to undertake. And when you do ‘courageous’ things to impress others, you are feeding your ego more than your godliness. Your passion-being cannot be based on the opinions and

interpretations of others, since this form of fame can never reflect your true godliness. Courage exists for godliness, and it exists so that the passion-being of all people can thrive despite the inhibitions of our worldly state. If your action is in alignment with your own passion-being and it allows your own self-determination to flourish, or if it allows for the self-determination of others to flourish without expecting certain responses from them, then the act is courageous.

The courageous acts of a liberation leader and the courage of a primary school child who decides to try out for rugby, are not different in nature. Depending on your situation, very different things could be courageous. Courage can be chosen at any second. Those things you have been putting off, the hateful thoughts you do not share, the necessary visit you have been dreading, the joys you have been delaying, or the exercise you have been avoiding, are all things you can consciously and courageously choose to pursue. When these things are not fulfilled, it can be a constant drain on your spiritwork, since when they pop up in your thoughts they could make you feel weak, guilty or fearful. A part of passion-being is finding ways to make the necessary actions in your life also be fulfilling and creative. So when the thought of exercise makes you feel bored, make it a passion-filled experience in your own creative way. That is a courageous act.

Courage is a constant calling to higher levels. So when you have mastered a certain form of courage, you are then called to express and experience new and higher forms of courage. Easy courage is what already becomes natural and a part of your daily routine, but which other people praise you for and find admirable. This does not mean that it is not courageous in itself, since you could be doing amazing and uplifting things, and guiding others to be more courageous in their lives. But easy courage usually does not push you to higher levels of your spiritwork. For some people standing in front of a crowd of a thousand people and giving a speech is an easy courage act. For someone else, working out every day is an easy

courage act. For someone else, feeding a hundred people is an easy courage act. Sometimes these acts can become so routine that they allow you to rest in the thought of being courageous, and not needing to deal with other aspects of your life.

Real courage is never stagnant. It is dynamic and creative. Even things which others might find very easy might require the greatest amount of courage from you, like saying 'I love you' to your child, or accepting something you cannot change, or admitting your feelings to someone when it is necessary. But these moments, when your heart pounds and you are frightened and every part of your ingrained-self wants you to run away, allow for you to step into the space of overcoming, and to be in the process of spiritual evolution.

The most courageous life is living in your passion-being, and living lovingly, honestly, adventurously and compassionately. This kind of life is dangerous in many ways. The danger is finding out that you do not have the same comfort zones anymore. The danger is finding out that you are not exactly the person you thought you were. And the danger is feeling the fear and knowing the difficulties involved, and doing it anyway. But the reward is the process of it: the sense of accomplishment, and the sense of development and power which courage can give you. The reward is allowing your own self-determination and the self-determination of others to flourish

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × Which areas of your life do you need courage in right now?
- × How can you approach your own growth in every sphere of your being through courage?

Ideas to reflect on: Acting outside of yourself; Easy courage; Higher levels of courage in your life.

Oneness with God

In truth, there is no duality in our being. This is simply an interpretation which allows us to discover and love the part of our being which is incomplete. But this part is still a part of the whole, the indistinguishable love. Everything that we are, and everything that we are surrounded by, is a part of love.

But sometimes, our highest self can be an aspect of our lives which is difficult to experience or remember every day. Spirituality can be a part of our existence which is difficult to feel. We imagine that it takes patience and hard work, and that it is a chore which is not a part of our normal lives. We feel a sense of separation from divinity, instead of living in divinity and knowing that divinity is everything that we are. We overvalue our individuality and forget our connection. But in reality, godliness is all that we are, and the rest of it is an illusion.

This is a necessary illusion. Without the illusion of separation and of time and space, we would not be able to experience the slow process of awakening, or the power of presence. But sometimes, the truth of God in us is muffled by our reliance on illusion. We become stuck in our worries, fears and desires, instead of resting in our connection and godliness.

The first step towards living in communion with godliness is having a clear understanding of what godliness entails, so that you know where to shift your alignment towards. God is the most extreme form of love, the only form of love. God and love can be defined by freedom, joy, fullness, passion, strength and beauty unlimited. God is the wisdom that resides in the deepest part of us. God accepts every part of us, because God is every part of us. God is the darkness and light, the unknowable and everything we can know. She is everything we experience, see, feel, hear, taste, smell, and touch, every murmur in our bodies or desire of our heart, and She is the link between us and everything because She is made up of us and everything.

God is beautiful in the sense of seeking only to be what it is, namely absolute love, power, freedom and joy. God is the expression of these things in every one of us. So, since God is infinite acceptance and infinite love, when we can emulate those characteristics we can move into godliness.

God is the ease in your soul. She is the height of presence, because She is all that there really is. She is what we call 'good' and 'bad', 'holy' and 'evil'. She is right and wrong. She is the way into a divine paradox: to be everything now, and to be on a journey towards everything. She opens, understands, changes, discovers, and stays the same. She is what we experience when we trust, when we relax, and when we dive into life and know that it is Her that we are diving into. She cradles us and lets us be. We are absolutely free always, and yet this has all been said and done. God is our greatest truth, our greatest acceptance, our passion-being, the fullness of our being, and our spiritwork. She is our openness to life, diversity, difference and experience, and she is our safety in comfort, truth, joy and knowledge. She is there when we love. She is the love that we express. Our idea of her evolves as we evolve, and as we experience love.

How can God be all of these things at the same time? How can She be darkness as well? Is darkness not what we should be resisting in life? Paradoxically, even our destructive and dark parts are parts of God. This is

because there is no separation between God and everything which exists. Everything is a part of the godly plan. But at the core, God is love, and the highest expression of love is when we move into light, and when we live in power, joy, freedom, and connection. This is because destruction is simply an illusion. It is a character of the illusory world of things, but nothing can really be destroyed in the grander scheme. There is always perfect love. So to move into the deepest nature of godliness, we move towards love, peace and unity, and we move away from destruction, even in the world of things. Our spiritwork is to make the world of things a reflection of the highest truth.

If God is everything, then what keeps us from oneness with God? Mostly, what keeps us from experiencing our godliness is how unwilling we are to look past our labels, and how we let our attachment to the illusions about ourselves become our self-definition. We cannot experience God in ourselves or in other people because we define humanity in narrow terms, and we ignore our connection to godliness in our perception of the world. We judge ourselves and others relentlessly.

We also make excuses to stay stuck in discord, which keeps us from godliness. We consider ourselves the victims of life, instead of expressions of God in it. So we might look at our circumstances and say that what we have is somehow unfair. Or we might delay moving into godliness because we have been hurt in the past. We are unwilling to live in passion-being because we fear a lack of success in what brings us passion. We do not realise that joy and passion are success enough. We are unwilling to see and experience small expressions of God, because we imagine that our spiritual unrest can be cured externally: if we can finish a project, have something more, or learn something first, we can have godliness. You already know everything you need to know to be godly. You already have all you need to have to be godly. And you have already done all you need to do to have godliness right now.

Our desires often influence our godliness, and we might even see it as a tool to achieve material things in life, instead of an end in itself. We

sometimes fear that our ideas of God cannot hold water, and that we need to justify and intellectualise them.

All of these factors hold many people back from godliness in their lives. But you can be with God in your own way. You can experience the perfection of love right now by turning towards godliness.

There are many different ways of experiencing godliness. Being in communion with God is found when engaging in your spiritwork. The ultimate goal of your spiritwork is to guide you to higher levels of experiencing and expressing love. Your spiritwork has many components. These are all the things that you engage in which lead to enlightenment, awakening, and a state of openness and readiness. Your spiritwork includes the creative transformation of anger and fear, reaching new levels of expression and experience, engaging in service, making passion-being a priority in life, and reaching self-awareness and new levels of honesty. These can be accomplished through meditation, prayer, taking pleasure in life, finding joy, finding worthwhile responsibilities and commitments, surrounding yourself with things which are in alignment with your highest truth, and nurturing each aspect of your being: your bodyplace, mindplace, emotionplace and soulplace. Each of these components is important in your spiritwork, and neglecting any of them could cause you to lose touch with your godliness. Being conscious of each part of your spiritwork is a challenging responsibility, and we all fall out of alignment at one point or another, or even live outside of our highest truth for years. But it is never too late to move back into communion with God. It is never too late to start your spiritwork again. You can reach for higher levels at any time. Sometimes, if many aspects of your life have been derailed, it is better to start off by focusing on improving one part of your spiritwork at a time. The most effective first step is reaching for self-awareness first, and then taking conscious action. We can easily become distracted by the illusions of the

world of things. Make spiritwork a part of your daily life, since it is the most resonant part of your life.

Another aspect of communion with god is the act of surrendering. We often feel that we are out of control of our lives, and we are frightened when we are not completely in control at all times. We look to the illusions of the world of things as our masters, instead of our creations. We misinterpret our power as a burden, instead of a tool. We begin to build up messages in our ingrained-self that we are weak or that we are incapable of living our lives.

But our godliness means that we are always powerful. We always have the capacity for reaching higher levels in every part of our being.

Surrendering is the act of looking past the illusions of the world of things, and falling into godliness. It is an act of letting God take control. What this means is that we allow our own godliness to flow into a situation. We make ourselves instruments of godliness, instead of slaves to our fear, anger, or confusions. When godliness can be our ultimate certainty in life, we can surrender to that certainty instead of being overwhelmed by uncontrollable events or circumstances in our lives. We have the power to transcend any situation. We have the capacity for limitless love. Surrendering is giving over our own uncertainties to our idea of God.

Surrendering does not mean that you are losing power, but instead it means that you are remembering your power. It does not mean that you are losing your freedom and are unable to make your own decisions, but instead you are tapping into the part of yourself that makes decisions out of upliftment, love and light. You are making decisions informed by godliness. When you can remember that you are connected to God, you can experience surrender as a way of immediately moving into your highest self. Surrendering will not cure your insecurities, and it will not result in perfect decisions or consequences. But it will allow the highest part of yourself to be present in situations.

Meditation

For this meditation, try to speak directly to the godly part of yourself. Speak to God about all of the things which you would like to remember about your own godliness. And then, try to listen to the response which every part of your being will give you. Communication with God is a part of most religions and spiritual practices, so if you already have an established way of communing with God, practice that with an awareness of what God really is in your conception. Below is an example of a prayer which you might use to start off the conversation. Make it your own.

- × Dear God, dear me, dear life, dear love, dear universe, dear creator and created, dear oneness. I am a part of you. Stay with me, stay in me, stay me, and stay in my consciousness of myself. Let me never forget my divinity and the divinity of all things, of all people. Let me see myself as what I truly am: an expression of your love, of the truths and joy and passion and power and beauty that you are. And let me accept myself as that. Let me understand my humanness. Be with me even though I am separate, and even though I have the ability to experience myself, other people and things as separate. Let me first and foremost remember that separation from you is a necessary and divine illusion. Let me trust the process which we and I and you are embarking, have embarked, and will continue to embark on. I surrender the challenging situations and circumstances of my life to my godliness. Let me create and delight as you have created and delighted. Let me be a messenger of the truth as I understand it, and let me be open to the truths around me always. Let me be what I am: an extension, an expression, a part of you and us. May my soul be my guide in order for my life to express my

truth and my passions. Let me choose always for godliness. Let me see godliness at every turn. Let me be present in the goodness that I am, that you are, that we are, and let me have, do and be goodness always. Amen.

Ideas to reflect on: Communion with God; Barriers to godliness.



Grace

Being one with God is being embraced by the grace of God. This is an idea which all major religions hold, and which many spiritual ideas are formed around. The grace of God is usually seen as the redemptive gesture of a personified God towards unworthy humans. But true grace extends further than this. True grace is a quality which we can possess, and which godliness can possess. It is a way of approaching the challenges and difficulties of the world in a way that is loving, and which spreads peace and unity.

You might be called to grace in the face of overwhelming emotions, in the face of friction in relationships, or when tragedies strike in your life. Being called to grace is when you can find a way to maintain your godliness even when things are not easy, and even when your circumstances change. So grace is the perseverance and transcendence of godliness when the world of things does not reflect that godliness. It is when you allow the powerful, loving energy of godliness to work through you when you are confronted with difficulties. When you are surrounded by people who are frightened, and you feel fear rising in yourself as well, grace is remembering that you are all stronger than whichever situation is causing you momentary fear, and then grace is bringing your whole being to that situation and finding ways to

transcend the emotions so that you can bring peace and unity. Grace is when you have a serious disagreement with your spouse, and when each of you is agitated and angry and cannot reach a resolution, but you are able to still remember your love, and to work towards peace and unity in your relationship. Grace is when you are struck by tragedies in life, when you are surrounded by the darkness of loss and despair, and when you can remember that you are still a godly being. Grace is when you can see light and love when life might resemble something far from it. Grace is bringing your whole self to a moment of pain, and remember your dignity and the dignity of all people, look into that pain, and find peace and unity through your godly connection.

Sometimes, grace does not lead us to solve a problem, or to have instant enlightenment about what is happening in a situation. But it does call us to take godly action in every moment. Sometimes, the best thing you can do is to take yourself out of situations which cause you to have extreme reactions. If you decide to stay in these situations, you might stray from grace when the emotions build. You might start to see yourself as defined by these instances of difficulty or challenge, and even seek them out in life or personally create them.

Sometimes we do not have the choice to remove ourselves from difficult situations. We might find ourselves stuck in the same space as someone who drives us crazy. We might find ourselves being habitually abused by someone. In these situations, grace is remembering that godliness means upliftment. That is, your upliftment as well as everyone else's. So if you are perpetuating a situation which is counter to the objectives of upliftment, or if you are responding to these situations in a way which does not assert your own dignity or the dignity of everyone around you, then you are straying from grace. Try to remember your own grace in these situations. Try to respond to these situations in ways which bring peace and unity. If the negativity of the situation persists, the only way to maintain grace is to work

towards ending the destructive situation. This is not an easy thing to do, especially when our ingrained-self has been accustomed to a particular way of living and being that might be stifling or destructive.

So grace is our outlook on life which allows us to be accepting, loving, and cherishing of every aspect of the current moment. It is when you can bring love to difficult situations, when you can bring presence to challenges, and when you can bring peace to situations where energies might be scattered or erratic. It is aligning yourself with your highest truth so that it can impact your surroundings as well.

Grace has also been seen as the grace of God, which is very similar to the grace explained above: an acceptance, love, and cherishing of all of us regardless of who we are or what we have been through. When you are in grace, you can feel the love of God. You can know that you are a beautiful expression of godliness despite your state of incompleteness. You can remember your connection to all things even when you might be feeling disconnected in a particular situation.

Grace comes into play when you are living outside of yourself, when you are disappointed by your own actions or thoughts, or when you see that you are resigning to negative patterns of your ingrained-self. Moving into grace then means feeling the love of God again. This is the act of refocusing on the connection which you have with all things, and the beauty, power, joy, and oneness which is behind the illusions of life.

How do you respond to the challenges of life gracefully? How do you remember to be godly even when your circumstances are impossibly difficult?

One of the aspects of grace is being hopeful. When you notice difficulties, hope is remembering that those situations are not permanent. Hope is seeing beyond the immediate and into the infinite, and it is remembering that you have, at all times, the power to transcend anything in life. Hope is the belief that your current situation does not define you, and

that you are able to overcome it. And it is the conviction that you will overcome it. When you are hopeful, you immediately enter a space of openness and readiness for new levels of development in your life. You start to move into alignment with your highest self, which is bigger than the current difficulties which you might be facing. So grace and hope are both reactions which can perceive more than the current situation that might be clouding your vision. You start to see the possibilities for growth and transcendence, instead of the immediate challenges. You start to move yourself into alignment with that transcendence, and spread that energy into your surroundings.

The difference is that hope is a future-oriented perception, and this could become a problem in some situations. You might become reliant on hope to the extent that you do not take action in your life in order to overcome your current situation, but instead focus on an image of an ideal future which you hope to achieve. While hope and visualisation are powerful tools for transcendence, they are useless when you do not bring the rest of your being into alignment with this transcendence. You need to take appropriate and logical action, and find ways to make your hopes into actualities. You need to be graceful within a situation, and then use that grace to take you to new levels. Hope could even make us stagnate within a current state when we become reliant on it, since the hope might be comforting us to such a degree that we neglect other aspects of our lives.

We need to remember our godliness in every aspect of our lives in order to reach higher levels of being. Grace is a way of remembering this highest truth even when the world of things presents a different picture to us.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × How have you failed to be graceful in situations before?
- × How can you bring grace to difficult situations in your life right now?
- × What does the grace of God mean to you?

Ideas to reflect on: Peace; Unity; Being a reflection of godliness; Hope.



Power

Power is a characteristic of our godly nature. Infinite power is inherent in each of us, and tapping into power is a way of experiencing and expressing our godliness in the world of things.

We have power in each sphere of our being. Our bodyplace has the power to manipulate the world of things, to physically act within space and time in a way which can bring about change. Our mindplace has the power of thought and the power of knowledge. We can find new frames of mind and new perspectives, and enter into openness and readiness through practicing this power. Our emotionplace has the power of gratitude and of enhancing our level of experiencing the world of things. And our soulplace has the power of grace, where we can move into godliness, and bring godliness to the world of things. We have the power to direct our lives, and to impact on people and things in meaningful ways. We also have the amazing power of creativity. These forms of power know no limit, since they tap into the deepest part of our connection to God.

Is power always good? What about when we use our power to be destructive and to negatively impact on our surroundings? In the world of things, power often becomes misunderstood. We could become frightened of

our own power, and we fear that we are not able to use it effectively. We might relinquish our power completely, and feel powerless towards another person or institution. We could see our power as limited, and imagine that external situations have more power over us than we could have to transcend them.

These misunderstandings of power might lead us to practice destructive behaviours so that we can feel powerful. Often, the feeling of powerlessness is responsible for addictions, eating disorders, abuse, violence and disrespect. When we feel powerless, we often rely on destruction to give us a form of satisfaction and gratification in life. This is because destruction looks like power in the world of things. It seems to have an effect on our surroundings, and we misinterpret having an effect for being powerful.

But destruction is the opposite of power. We are limiting the expression of the full power of all things, and thereby we are limiting our own power as well. When we abuse someone, we take away their power to determine their own life and dignity. We disempower them by making them see an image of humanity which is overpowering. But we also disempower ourselves. This is because we start to become that image of humanity as well, and it starts to define our lives. We are unable to transcend these situations and reach for our godliness, because we teach ourselves that in order to feel any semblance of power, we need to disempower others. So we cannot fully realise our power unless there is someone else to disempower. Our experience of power becomes defined by destruction. And for that reason, we necessarily rely on the illusions of the world of things and on moving away from our godliness in order to practice destruction. Since true power is a part of godliness, it is not found in destruction. It is not found in spaces where godliness is not the goal. So not only are we taking away the power of others, we are also taking away our own power or relying on powerless parts of ourselves when we are destructive.

Why do so many people practice destructive behaviours? Why do they not understand their powerful nature? We all forget our power at times in life. That is the nature of the world of things: we become invested in the illusions of separation at times to the point where we forget our godly nature. The call to awakening is our way of returning to godliness. At times, we become so invested in the world of things that we forget our love connection. We become centred on ourselves and the external validation of our power, usually through destructive behaviours like addictions, abuse or disempowering others. When we abuse a substance, we are destroying our bodyplace, and in the world of things this gives us the illusion that at least we have power over this one aspect of our lives. But in truth, we are disempowering ourselves further by practicing destructive behaviours. We misinterpret destruction and the oppression of others for power. This is because it seems to us that if someone else is powerless, this must mean that we are relatively powerful. If we are rich and someone else is poor, and we do not take steps to alter the conditions within society which perpetuates poverty, this must mean that we are more powerful than those who are poor. If we are educated and someone else is not, this must mean that we are more powerful than them.

Yet in our deepest nature, power is a tool for upliftment of all things to godliness. If we are being destructive, or if we are not practicing upliftment and seeing our own lifestyles as testament of our power, we are necessarily not acting out of our place of power. This is because true power does not feed on oppression or inequality. True power is only a tool for godliness. In the world of things, when we practice destruction, we are acting out of a distortion of power which has become tied into the illusions of the world of things. We are acting out of darkness instead of out of light and love. What we are doing is actually oppressing our own power. This is why oppression is often practiced out of fear or out of negative reactions to anger. This is why oppressors are often carrying the baggage of their own powerlessness in life,

and seek to find the illusion of power through disempowering others. This is why oppression is tied to the stifling of love, and why true love-connections are impossible under oppression. When you misinterpret power through the illusions of the world of things, you see it as a means of control. When you rely on the need to control the world of things, you suffer from the negative emotions which go with this pointless obsession. It is pointless because no matter how much you try, you cannot control everything in life. True power comes from understanding this.

Power also becomes an end in itself for many people. They see the maintenance and perpetuation of their illusions of power as their only goal in life. They hold on to power with such zeal that it overshadows upliftment, or they attach so much fear to the loss of power that it begins to become self-destructive. Whether this is a form of true power aimed at upliftment, or the illusion of power aimed at destruction or control, holding on to one form of power should never be the end goal. Power is always a tool for bringing godliness to your surroundings, and for empowering others as well, and when you see this power as more important than what you do with it, you are misusing your power.

Holding on to the illusions of power is the opposite of surrendering to your highest truth. Your highest truth incorporates power, but it is also joy, love, and connection to all things. When you misinterpret your power, you are blocking off channels to your full godliness.

You are a powerful being, and you can use your power to achieve great levels of expression and experience in life. You can bring upliftment in amazing ways when you act out of your godly power. Knowing your own power and finding ways to use it effectively in your life will lead to a greater connection to your godliness.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × How are you practicing your godly, uplifting power in the world?
- × How do destructive behaviours take place in your life, and how are these linked to distortions of power?

Ideas to reflect on: Destruction as a distortion of power; Power as an end in itself; Oppression.



Experience

Experience is getting to know the world of things in new and dynamic ways, gaining knowledge, and moving into higher spheres of being. Experience is a part of the meaning of life. We are here to be ourselves fully, and to see how we can relate to the world of things when the conditions of our lives are constantly shifting. No two days are exactly the same, and seeing who we are when things change is a part of experiencing life.

Self-knowledge is one of the major aspects of experience. Whether we are conscious of it or not, we are getting to know ourselves better all the time. Self-knowledge is inescapable in life. But sometimes we mistake the manifestation of our ingrained-self for self-knowledge. We think that because we demonstrate fear in certain situations, that we can define ourselves as fearful. We think that because we have been a certain person up to the current time, we must be that type of person by nature. Self-knowledge can also become stagnant. If you are not getting to know new aspects of yourself, or if you are not actively probing your ingrained-self or your godly nature at various points in your life, you might not be developing your self-knowledge. We can also fail to discover the highest version of ourselves because we become invested in limited illusions about ourselves. So if we

start to strongly associate with the labels which we might have, such as ‘outcast’, ‘attractive’, ‘emotional’ or ‘homebody’, we might find that we do not get to experience ourselves in new ways. Through self-development, we can begin to discover the highest version of ourselves and to move away from the illusions which we might hold. Through moving into new spaces of being and taking on new challenges in life, we start to understand more things about ourselves. We can expand our being, and realise that we are capable of a lot more than we might have thought.

Experiencing yourself in new ways could be accomplished through experimenting. This is a good way of gaining experience if you do not have clarity on who exactly you are. You might have let go of illusions about yourself, and not know what you are without those illusions. This is where experimenting with different roles can help you to experience your true nature. Even if a course of action does not seem like one you would normally take, experimenting with it might be a way for you to expand your view of yourself.

The limit to experimentation is when something is not in alignment with your godly nature, and not in alignment with upliftment. So, when you find yourself faced with a chance to explore a new role or a new way of being, you could find that it does not lead you to experiencing or sharing power, beauty, joy, freedom, love or connection. If this is the case, the new role is not in alignment with your highest self, and the experience is one which might take you away from your highest truth.

Often we are simply afraid of experimenting with a new role because it contradicts an illusion which we hold in our ingrained-self. Being able to recognise the difference between something which we are fearful of, and something which works against our highest truth, is essential in experiencing ourselves fully.

Even our unpleasant experiences in life add to our wealth of experience. Sometimes we make decisions which are not in alignment with our highest

truth. We do things which we know are leading us further from our godly nature. This could be because we feel powerless, because we are acting out of unresolved aspects of our ingrained-self, or because we allow our investment in the world of things to dictate our actions. We can never be persuaded to do something outside of our highest truth if we did not have the seeds of this action within us. So peer-pressure, on a deeper level, is actually about acting out deep-seated insecurities and fears, instead of simply being the influence of other people.

Sometimes, unpleasant experiences are not our doing, but are a part of the challenges and difficulties of life. We are not in complete control of everything that happens, but we do have a responsibility to respond to every new situation in a way which is in alignment with godliness and upliftment. These unpleasant and difficult experiences can expose us to new ideas about ourselves. Our emotional reactions to these challenges, and our ability to act out of grace, are all part of experiencing these situations.

This does not mean that we need to take actions out of alignment with our highest selves in order to find new experiences, or that we need to seek out difficulties and challenges in order to know ourselves fully. Our highest nature is godliness, so when we seek out situations which are not in alignment with this, we are becoming more invested in the illusions of the world of things, and we are not experiencing our godliness. When we are consistently making godly decisions, we will find that amazing new possibilities to experience the joy, beauty, love, power and connection of our nature will arise. We will reach higher levels in every aspect of our being, and we will open channels to godliness in ourselves and others. This is what the deepest experience of ourselves is all about. Even though we can see parts of ourselves in darkness, we can be the highest parts of ourselves when we move into honesty and light.

Beyond ourselves, we can also experience the world of things. We can experience every aspect of our individual being in relation to the world of

things. We can get to know our bodies and see how they react to new situations. We can get to know our minds and experience deeper levels of knowledge and new frames of thinking. And we can get to know our emotions and understand how we react to different situations.

We necessarily experience life more fully when we are present within a moment. We can have the fullness of experience when we are conscious of every aspect of a particular situation. Since presence is bringing your whole being to a particular moment, and every aspect of our being is capable of experiencing on different levels, we can combine all of these levels of experience when we are present.

A big part of experience is also the act of witnessing. We are here as witnesses to the lives of others, and as witnesses of the world of things. We are taking in stimuli, processing them and allowing them to impact on us. All of these aspects add to our wealth of experience. Witnessing can also include seeing life through the perspectives of others, and in that way we can get to know the differences between people more intimately.

This is why fiction is such a powerful tool for building compassion in people, and why it can help us to tap into our godly nature in new ways. We are hearing the story which someone else wants to tell, through their voice, and we can begin to see the validity and the power within that perspective. When we can imagine the story of someone else, and understand that a human being is capable of that particular perspective and experience, we are expanding our own connection with others. Witnessing involves listening to and observing those around us in a way where we can get to know the very nature of humanity more intimately through diversity. When we can see things through the perspective of others, we can enlarge our own field of experience. We can also find new levels of compassion and love. This is why dialogue is also an important part of experiencing other people. Dialogue is a way of intimately being a witness to the perspective which someone else

carries, and of respecting their dignity by giving them a chance to voice that perspective.

What is the point of experience? Why is experience important in our godliness? We are meant to know ourselves better, and to reflect the godliness which is present in each of us. We are here to discover, delight, and engage with the world of things. This is finding joy. So experience is our way of engaging with the splendour of the world of things, and reaching an understanding of how humanity deals with very different situations. In this way, we can connect with all humanity more deeply, and we can develop our understanding of godliness over time.

To a great degree in our lives, our experiences are informed by our ingrained-self. If we are invested in a particular way of being, we will probably invite more of that way of being into our lives. Development needs to be slow so that it can stick with us, and we can process every new experience within the framework of what has come before. So our ingrained-self is informing the way we react to new experiences in your life, and every new experience is forming an impression on your ingrained-self. For example, when you are invested in the idea of disconnection, you will probably find more experiences of disconnection and separation in your life.

When you can look at experiences as the unfolding of a godly plan, you are tapping into the highest truth of life. When you can bring presence to every experience, you can intimately witness the unfolding of this story.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × Which experiences in your life have impacted you greatly, be it in a positive or negative way? How do you still carry these experiences in your ingrained-self?
- × Which experiences that could be rewarding for you might you be closing yourself off to?
- × How are you opening yourself to new experiences in your life right now?

Ideas to reflect on: Experimentation; Wealth of experience; Reaching for honesty and light; Perspective through witnessing the stories of others.



Expression

When you express, you exercise your godly power upon the world of things. You are altering and transforming things external to your own being. You are channelling fear, anger, love and joy into new forms through creativity. These external interactions demonstrate a part of who you are to the world. You are imprinting yourself onto the external. Whichever forms of expression you undertake, they are always influenced by your individuality, and they impact the world in a way which only you can.

This is important since your being is a form of existence which godliness has never taken before, and never will take again. Since you are connected to godliness and it is experiencing the world of things through your being, when you can express yourself you can begin to discover your individuality in new ways. The externality of your expression is a reflection of many parts of yourself, and by witnessing the way you express, you are able to see yourself in these externalities.

Both experience and expression on some level require interaction with the world of things. We need to engage with what is different from us in order to express or experience what we are. So work, service, creativity and our possessions are all different forms of expression. We have had an impact

on the things or people involved in these aspects of our lives, and we have made ourselves external to ourselves.

When you express, you can also make sense of what is happening inside of you. When you can write in your journal, or speak to someone you trust, or dance, sing, act or paint, you can begin to solidify the stirrings inside of you. You might not know exactly why you feel unsettled by a particular situation, or you may not be able to place a dream into context, until you find a way to express it. You might also be bottling up many different forms of anger, fear and uncertainty, and when you do not find ways to express these and to process them, they could cause you to have major psychological, physical or emotional problems. You might have sexual dysfunction, or you might be stagnant in your relationships, work or service. Being able to express what is happening inside of you might help you to overcome these difficulties.

If you are in a loving relationship, an important part of that bond is being able to express yourselves with each other. You need to be able to express the dynamics of your relationship, and express different aspects of your being to your partner. Without the freedom of expression within a relationship, and without a working and healthy system of expression, the relationship will start to take turns that neither of you might want. Being able to express your love in different ways, and to express your ideas and emotions about your relationship, is an important ingredient in maintaining the love-connection as uplifting for both of you.

Expression incorporates artistry and creativity. Creativity is a vital part of your godliness. It allows you to see further than the world of things, into the infinite and into all that is possible. When you can mould creativity into physical form, you are practicing godliness. You are bringing godliness into the world of things. You are expanding the range of what is possible, both in your life and for others who come into contact with your creative pieces. We all practice creativity at some point or another. We find a more efficient way

to do our jobs which no one had thought of before, or we bring beauty into our homes through matching decorative items, or we dream and imagine new and magical things. Being able to express this creativity is a way of being open and ready for new levels in your life. When you can bring beauty into the world, you can be witness to this beauty, and invite new beauty into your life as well. When you can imagine yourself at a higher level in a particular sphere of your life, you can start to see how this level is possible, and that allows you to be open and ready for this new level to materialise in your life. Creativity is a way to demonstrate the soulplace in the world of things. It is a way to witness the infinity of beauty, power, joy, and connection. It is a way to live in your passion-being.

When you express, you teach yourself about your ingrained-self and about what type of person you are. We all have thoughts and feelings that scatter through us, but expression is the selectivity of which of those thoughts and feelings we would like to make into reality. And through this, we determine ourselves. When we act out of the darkness of our ingrained-self, and we express violence or resentment or frustration or attachment, we gradually demonstrate to ourselves that we are defined by those aspects. The more we choose to express a particular trait, the more it comes to inform our self-image and our image to the rest of the world. So we might become a resentful person, or a greedy person, or a fearful person based on our expressions. Of course, these illusions do not negate our highest truth, but they start to have more power over us and over others the more we express them. When we act mostly out of our godliness and our highest truth, we bring our self-image into alignment with that highest truth. We start to demonstrate that image to others we encounter, and we allow for our actions to uplift them and ourselves to godliness. When we express aspects of our godliness in the world of things, we demonstrate the possibility of higher levels of light and love to everyone. These aspects come to seem ever more possible in our lives and in the lives of others, and new states of openness

and readiness are attained. We also show a face of humanity which is in alignment with godliness, and this impacts on the mindplace of those we encounter.

This does not mean that expressions of other aspects of your being are bad, or that thinking, feeling and acting out of your ingrained-self is a necessarily negative activity. This is because these forms of expression can also be powerful tools in reaching for godliness. They could be stories of aspects of humanity which might offer new perspective and knowledge for ourselves and others. They could be creative channellings of anger and fear into forms which make them affecting and beautiful to witness, and which expand our compassion and connection to others who are also experiencing these states. They could give us more insight into our ingrained-self so that we can be conscious of ourselves and then reach for godliness. So when these forms of expression are undertaken with the goals of upliftment, they also become tools for godliness.

Expression which is not in alignment with the goals of upliftment, love and connection for all people, might be destructive. When you express out of a place of destructiveness, you are showing a connection to the illusions of the world of things instead of to your godly connection. So, you might be reinforcing those parts of your being which you are making external through your expression.

Godly expression might be difficult for many different reasons. You could be heavily invested in the aspects of your ingrained-self which expression tries to bring into love and light, and thus you could resist expressing these aspects. You could be fearful of the exposure which expression might bring you, where others might have access to parts of yourself that you are only beginning to accept and cherish, or that you detest and fear. You could also feel inadequate in your mode of expression, imagining that if you are not the best dancer, you should not be dancing at all, or that if you cannot make money from your writing, that perhaps writing

is not worth your time. These fears of your own expression are usually external to the godliness of the act itself. You avoid living in your passion-being because you become tied to the illusions of the world of things which surround your expression.

Your ability to express is a part of your godly nature. It is a way of using your power, and bringing about beauty and joy in the world of things. It is your way of understanding yourself more intimately, and it forms a large part of your passion-being. To attain this godly connection, you need to appreciate your own unique form of expression, and learn to express more freely in every aspect of your life.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × Which forms of expression bring you into your highest truth?
- × How do you use expression as a tool to get to know yourself better?
- × Do you feel free to express yourself in the way that you choose?
Which barriers hold you back from full expression?

Ideas to reflect on: Creativity; Making yourself external; Impacting on the world of things; Loving expression in relationships.

The Mysteries of Life

Life is filled with wonder and sometimes unanswerable questions. We travel to strange and wonderful places when we dream, we encounter miraculous patterns and symmetries in our experiences and in nature, and we are confronted by the great mysteries of death and the true nature of the soul. We wonder about what exists beyond what we have explored: are there alternate dimensions? Is there intelligent life on other planets? Can we be visited by those who have died? Can we predict the future? And when will the world end?

These questions might be seen as complete nonsense to some people, but a part of us is sparked by these mysteries in life. We are drawn to them, and we marvel at the things which we cannot explain and cannot comprehend. This is why the magnificence of nature can often cause us to be awed. We are witnessing something which is far greater than our individual understanding, and seeing how design and patterns can come together to make astounding beauty. We are witnessing the effects of infinite power in the world of things, where it seems that things have come together perfectly in a way that we cannot explain. We could be shaken by the coincidences of life, where someone who you have not seen in years calls you just when you

are thinking of them, or you start singing the same song as someone else at exactly the same time. These things could absolutely be put down to coincidence, and often science can reach towards answers for them, but in everyday experience they still cause us to be blown away by the way things work.

These mysteries exist for a reason. We are not given all the answers right now, and everything does not make complete sense to us. But confronting mystery is a way of reaching beyond what is known and given, and moving into the infinity of new possibilities. We begin to imagine what could be beyond our current experiences, and this is the fuel of innovation and development. We start to question whether the current system of being is really the best system of being, and in that we find newness that can take us closer to godliness. We start to map the patterns and coincidences in life, and this leads to a new wealth of knowledge which offers meaning and comfort to the lives of many.

This book has also dealt with many of the mysteries in life. I have hoped to do this in a way which does not take away any of the wonder or splendour of these mysteries, but rather to illuminate the way that we can effectively deal with these questions while still respecting that there is never a final answer to many of them. So you can know what love is to you, and you can know how to feel and share love, but the mystery and the miracle of what love is can still cause you to be reverent towards it, and to need to find your own way of trusting. When you find a meaning of life which works for you, the meaning of life is still a mysterious thing which goes beyond your complete comprehension. Your answer is simply a way of reaching towards and engaging with the infinite. So this book has looked at mystery and wonder, and sought to show the perfection of the design, but also to uphold the wonder and mystery which might have led you to this search in the first place.

The mysteries and the difficult questions are there so that you can engage with your own interpretation and your own creativity. You can look into mystery in your own way, and make sense of things as they apply to you. If you choose to have a definite answer to life's difficult questions which allows you to operate effectively, then that is your way of engaging with mystery. If you choose to ignore these questions completely and frown upon those who have their own interpretations, then that is also your choice. But mystery is a way of guiding you towards the infinite and towards investigation. If no one had ever wondered at these mysteries in life, we would not have discovered many of the amazing things which we now take for granted.

How many of these answers do you really need? Which questions are worth further exploration? Sometimes, we can find some amazing answers about ourselves in the systems and practices which engage with these mysteries and try to make sense of them. We could discover spiritual principles which work for us, such as the law of attraction. Or we could find new insights through numerology, astrology or new forms of meditation. We could take solace in religious rituals and teachings which allow us to feel our godly connection. Or we could find a community which allows us to practice upliftment on higher levels. We could engage in scientific undertakings to discover answers to the questions of intelligent life on other planets, or to find the true nature of the soul. All of these undertakings are ways of looking at the mystery in our own lives and reaching towards making them meaningful.

Your engagement with mystery can be a tool for your growth, but it can also become a distraction from your godliness. When you start to relentlessly pursue a particular mystery, you might start to forget about upliftment. Your desire to find definite answers to a particular mystery might be fuelled by the need to control, and might be leading you outside of your passion-being or to forget about your highest truth. If you are trying to force a mystery into a

mould which preaches anything opposing the goals of upliftment, you might be moving away from your highest love in this action. Your desire for answers might no longer lead to innovation or creativity, but rather lead to stagnation and resentment that you are unable to control the mystery.

Some answers to the great mysteries in life are beautiful and uplifting, and some invoke fear. You need to decide for yourself which of these systems you choose to follow, and then find a way to come from love and godliness within whichever system you choose.

Whenever you discover the answer to one mystery, you find a new mystery to ponder upon. Your ultimate state in the world of things is uncertainty, and that is how it is meant to be in order for you to discover your own way in the world. The mysteries are meant to be bigger than you, and you cannot control them. Your most basic mystery in life is who you are, and you are discovering this answer anew every day. Look at mystery as an adventure instead of as an obstacle. Look at the difficult questions as ways to witness the wonder of creation.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What role does wonder and mystery play in your life? Do you have any definite answers which you choose to subscribe to, and which give your life meaning?
- × Which mysteries inspire a sense of adventure and exploration in you?

Ideas to reflect on: Mystery and possibilities; Uncertainty.

The Way Forward

How should you live your life? What is the best choice to make in every moment? No one really knows, and we make mistakes all the time. We are all untrained at life for the most part, and need to discover things for ourselves. We need to discover how to treat others in a way that is authentic. We need to discover what we want to do and be. We need to reach towards our own understandings and beliefs. But at every turn, there is uncertainty. At every moment of elevation, there are new challenges.

So where do we go from here?

The way forward for your individual life is informed by the way forward for all of us. Through your actions, you are impacting on everything, and choosing a way of being for yourself is deciding on what you want to see outside of yourself. What type of world do you want to live in? What type of communities do you want to see? Your own way forward has an impact on these things.

We are emerging from a long period of extreme investment in the illusions of the world of things, into a higher consciousness. We can feel this evolution. We are all becoming more aware of our impact on each other and on the world. Policies and practices which are contrary to upliftment are

being exposed, and many of us are making the choice to reach for upliftment instead.

But things have already gone far in the direction of darkness. We have already seen the balance of our world shifted. We have destroyed many of our natural wonders, and depleted many of our natural resources. Prejudices and hatreds have been allowed to define populations. We have grown our populations to unsustainable levels. We have engaged in practices which threaten the health and safety of many people, and we have set up the conditions where people are unable to reach for godliness, let alone subsistence, in their own lives. We have robbed each other of the chance to experience power through greed, oppression and exploitation. We have set up systems which overvalue the voices of a few and ignore the voices of the majority. We have allowed poverty and corruption to seep into societies. And we have allowed our mental and physical health to become greatly disrupted.

Is there still a way to move into godliness? Is there a way to repair the damage we have already done, and find connection and light?

There is always hope. Because you are an instrument of godliness, you have the power to change the world. And when we can form communities who are all committed to upliftment, we can reach miraculous change. Through dialogue and shifting consciousness into light and love, we impact on the world in a positive way.

You start with the small things, and you start with yourself first. When you can mould your life into the image of what you want to see in the world, you become an example of humanity which can reach that level. You begin to inspire growth in those you come in contact with. Even if the conditions of your life are not ideal, you can be a source of godliness through love and upliftment. You need to begin to change your surroundings with whichever resources you have access to. If you know that a certain system is cruel, oppressive or unhealthy, you can begin to move away from that system right now into light and love. If you know that one aspect of your life is causing

you to be overinvested in the world of things and to forget your godliness, then you can reach towards overcoming that aspect today. For example, if you are addicted to gambling, and you know that it brings you and your family shame and despair whenever you give in to your addiction, you can start to reach towards ways of overcoming this addiction. This is your small way of being a part of a greater shift in society. When you can make yourself a symbol of godly power, joy, love, freedom and connection, then all of us move closer to that goal. When you can look past the way that those who are overinvested in the world of things will try to make you become like them, you can start to spread your godliness to others. They will try to make you a part of their system so that their way of life can be validated. But beneath that is the fear and anger that they cannot reach for the godliness that you are reaching for. Believe me, for every person who tries to break you down, there will be those who notice and appreciate your godliness. They might not tell you personally, but you are affecting others by being a symbol of light and love.

In addition to making yourself a source and a vessel of godliness, you can start or join communities which reach for light and love. We can see our power more clearly in communities. We can accomplish our goals more effectively when we are part of a movement in the direction of light and love. We can realise that there are people out there who consciously and actively seek for upliftment, and we can become agents for upliftment in our surroundings. You could find ways to express your passion-being more powerfully when you are a part of a community. You could open greater pathways to godliness when you find someone to share in spiritual evolution. Community is the way that we can find new levels of expression and experience, and it allows us to see the godliness which other people are connected to. Real change comes when people can come together to make the dreams of a better life for all into a reality.

One of the most powerful ways to shift your consciousness into light and love is to trust the process of life. When you trust that godliness is the highest truth and the deepest nature of all things, then you begin to see godliness in everything more clearly. You begin to find possibilities for attaining godliness more easily if your consciousness is focused on godliness. You begin to see every step of the process, even the difficult steps, as part of godliness unfolding. Trust is your way of remembering the perfection of creation, and that every part of creation is meaningful. Trust is your way of aligning your being with grace, and knowing that godliness is prevailing in every moment.

The way forward requires a commitment from all who seek for true godliness to infuse our world. We need to be committed to our own health and wellbeing, and to making sure that we are in alignment with our highest truth. We need to be committed to other people, and to uplifting them so that they can live in dignity and determine their own lives as well. And we need to commit to the Earth. We need to make sure that the wonders of nature and the beauty of all life forms are respected and maintained, because all of these forms of existence are expressions of godliness. And by destroying them we are limiting the expression of godliness all around us. By making godliness our guide in life, the way forward becomes a path to higher levels of light and love.

Meditation

Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions in your journal.

- × What is the way forward in your life? Reflect on what your path is towards achieving the highest levels of godliness personally and socially.

Ideas to reflect on: Hope for the future; Starting with the small things; Community; Trust.

Recap of Part III

The highest truth about you is often the most elusive aspect. You might have very definite ideas about what your connection to godliness entails, but you might still struggle to truly be present to those understandings. Part III aims to make godliness an active presence in your life by offering you tools to remember all of the ways you can be in touch with it. Part III deals with the qualities which are in alignment with godliness, with strategies for making these qualities a part of your life.

The first chapter immediately delves into one of the most difficult questions you will face: what is the meaning of your life? Meaning could be seen as the purpose and guiding principle your life, but it could also be the things that give you drive and inspire you. Some answers which are offered to this question are that life is meant as service to God, that it is the platform for experience and expression, or that life is simply meaningless. Finding your own meaning will inform your relationship with godliness.

An important part of that relationship is presence. Presence is remembering your godliness in every moment of your life, and bringing your full being to every moment. When you can be present, you can experience and express at higher levels.

Presence also stems into a state of ambition. Ambition is celebrating and exploring the possibilities of life, and being committed to taking your passion-being to higher level. This ambition is often expressed in goals and

dreams, which are a part of the creativity and dynamism of passion-being, and are also a way to enter a state of openness and readiness for new levels in life. Bringing presence to the state of ambition will allow you to not rest in results or wait for the fulfilment of goals or dreams in order to appreciate your ambition. Instead, you will see every step of the process as godly, and look at all of the possibilities in life with love.

Your state of ambition often requires courage. Courage is when you can take action towards your highest self despite fear. It is when you can choose your ambition, and choose for upliftment, and choose for grace, even when these are difficult things to accomplish in a given situation. Your ingrained-self might be opposed to a new framework which is in alignment with light and love, and courage is entering openness and readiness despite the barriers of your ingrained-self. Courage is always a calling to a higher level of overcoming fear and reaching for upliftment.

When we can remember our highest self in all of these aspects of life, we can begin to recognise the presence of God more clearly in our lives. Oneness with God involves negotiating your idea of God and your relationship with God. It involves looking into your ingrained resistances to communion with God. We all have these resistances. In fact, these resistances form a large part of your ingrained-self. They are your investments in the illusions of the world of things, especially your illusions about yourself, which often can lead you to forget your own beauty, power, joy, love and connection. Reaching oneness with your own godliness is the ultimate goal of your spiritwork, and surrendering can be an important step in moving into alignment with your highest self.

When you surrender to your highest self, you are consumed by the grace of God. You are embraced within the highest truth of all things. Grace is reaching for peace, love and unity in difficult situations. So when you are consumed by the grace of God, you remember that even though you are human and are incomplete in the current moment, you are still connected to

the ultimate love which defines God. And when you can be graceful when faced with challenges, you choose a course of action which will bring about peace, love and unity in your surroundings. Grace is about being hopeful that there will be resolution to challenges and that higher levels of light and love are coming. Grace is being open to the presence of God even when you feel far removed from your own godliness.

One of the characteristics of your highest self which is often misinterpreted is that of power. Real power is the opposite of destructiveness. It is bringing about higher levels of light and love in the world, not diminishing the possibilities for the expression of these godly qualities. Often, due to severe overinvestment in the world of things, people could confuse self-aggrandisement or control for power, and see power as an end in itself. But in reality, your godly power is your ability to take yourself and all others to higher levels.

You also have the power to experience and express in every aspect of your being. Experience can be seen as a receptive process: you are taking in what life has to offer you, developing your own understandings, and discovering new things about yourself, about the world and about God. You go on new adventures and see yourself in different ways. Your experience of life is often mediated by your ingrained-self, and even joyful experiences can be marred when they become filtered through your ingrained-self. Getting to know your ingrained-self will help you to unearth why you experience life the way you do.

Expression is the act of imprinting yourself onto the world of things. You are showing yourself to yourself by making the internal tangible. So expression could involve creativity and artistry, service, work, or dialogue and communication. Your individuality is present in every moment of expression, and you get to know who you are when you express.

The penultimate chapter of Part III discusses the mysteries of life. There are no clear answers to these questions. We do not know exactly what

will happen when we die, what the true nature of the soul is, or what exists beyond our perception and science. But mystery and wonder offer us ways to look into the limitlessness of life, and to see the endless possibilities which exist. We can be creative with our interpretations precisely because there are so many unanswerable questions. Mystery can be a great adventure in life.

Part III ends with a contemplation of the way forward for all of us. In your individual journey, once you have reached new understanding, you need to find ways to practice service and to engage with your highest self which work for you. The way forward for all of us is upliftment and moving to higher levels of consciousness and godliness. We are instruments of godliness in the world, and we have tremendous power to align everything with the highest truth.

Things to think about as you finish this book

- × What has been the most resonant idea or the most profound understanding which you have discovered through the meditations in Part III?
- × What has been the most challenging aspect of working through Part III?
- × Try to answer this question as fully as you can now: What is your highest truth?
- × How do you plan to use any of the understandings in this book in your life?

Back to Incomplete

Where do you go after you dive into the deepest waters of yourself? What do you do when you have seen many different aspects of your being in new light, and when you have found perspective and meaning? What is next when you have looked at the challenging questions and found resolve?

You go back to incomplete. Back to wondering who you are, how you engage with the world, and what your deepest truth means to you. You face all of life's challenges anew. Your ingrained pain and insecurities resurface, you are struck by difficulties and tragedies, you become overinvested in one aspect of your being, and you forget your godliness. But you go there better equipped each time. You go there having been through so much more than you thought you were capable of. You go there with renewed conviction and resolve.

What is the point of doing your spiritwork if it never ends? Why reach for awakening if it does not lead to finality and to perfection at some point?

Because the process is perfection. Your duality, and your experience and expression, is the perfection of a godly plan. Your state of uncertainty and of being a part of the world of things allows you to slowly grow in

understanding. You are able to experience your power, beauty, joy, love and connection anew every day. You are able to develop your passion-being on higher levels, and engage in responsibility and commitment. You can experience yourself from many different angles. You can build a home and a family, a career, a lifestyle, and a mode of service which is unique to you.

If we were complete, we would not need for any of these processes. If there were an end point in our growth and evolution, and if we found the perfect system of being with each other and with god at all times, we would lose our full sphere of experience. There would be no fear which could lead us to courage. There would be no anger which could lead us to energetic creativity. There would be no difficulties which could lead us to grace. We would not explore or wonder or discover. The godly process of living would be lost.

Know and trust that the plan is perfect, and that it allows you to have the fullness of experience and expression of your unique beauty, power, love, joy and connection. Know and trust that your deepest, highest truth is the perfection of all of these things. Know and trust that we are all partners in this magnificent, divine purpose, and that we are moving together to higher levels of godliness. Know and trust the presence of God every second of every day.

You are going back to incomplete, but you are going there at a higher level of light and love. And you are raising your surroundings to higher levels as you ascend.

And I cried like I haven't cried in a long time – cried for bravery, for injustice and for how bravery exists despite injustice, for fear and for courage in the face of fear, for seemingly insurmountable mountains, and incredible oppression, and the face of humanity that is so ugly it's sickening. And then the good people who stand up and make their voices heard, and take charge of their own lives and their own situations, and do the unpopular and the difficult and the scary thing, and face death and pain and constant rejection and failure, but they keep going because they have FAITH and TRUST in the fact that the heart of life is good and that we are bigger than all of this, than all of the squabbles and wars and hatreds, we are still loving, beautiful, caring, real, innocent despite it all. We are still children trying to find our way, with candlelight in deep, cold darkness. But the light still shines, and people are still resilient and beautiful when you put your hand inside their hearts or their souls or you listen closely to their love and their loneliness and their uncertainty and their longing. Their longing, their desperation to be connected with you and me and us and everything. We are all troubled, we are all hateful at times, but behind that, above that, inside of that we are frightfully Godlike and profoundly tender. If we could see our hearts, our real hearts! If I could see the extent of my soul I would gasp all the world's air, I would cry every drop in my body.

About the Author

Grant Andrews lives in Cape Town, South Africa. He currently teaches English at the University of the Western Cape, and spends much of his time writing and listening to music. His passions include education, literature, development, creativity and spirituality. He is very grateful and blessed that you have read *Back to Incomplete*, and wishes you amazing levels of beauty, joy, power, love and connection in your life.

Back to Incomplete will continue to evolve, and will include classes, videos, forums, music and books. You can follow the development on Facebook or twitter, or on the *Back to Incomplete* blog.

backtoincomplete@gmail.com

