

A new way of looking at old ideas.

Transcendence seems to have become the main focus of the spiritual mystery but is only a fraction of its base and it isn't even a major factor in understanding human development. This article introduces many different aspects of the spiritual mysteries within each human being. It has no affinity to any religion and can be accessed and understood by everyone. I have only flagged up and explained major strands that are easily identifiable. Spiritual concepts such as Consciousness, Justice, Conscience, Reasoning and Knowledge, Nature, Healing, Inner and Outer Worlds, Truth, Love and Compassion are major tools in helping individuals to develop their potential and contributing to universal consciousness.

What is the point of our existence?

The question, 'what is the point of our existence?' has probably been asked ever since humans began to abstract this world. To me there seems evidence to help resolve part of that question. To start understanding the point of our existence, each individual has to begin from where they are now. If we can perceive life as a journey working towards reality and consciousness, with our contribution adding a piece to the whole, then our place in the universe becomes really important. Consciousness is a vital key to understanding our existence: the more we explore, the deeper our awareness of the human condition. It is the search for reality that should be our motivation in life, using our spiritual tools to underpin our individual actions. For many individuals, progress is impeded by not understanding, or not wanting to understand what intrinsic values are important, distorting their judgements by woolly beliefs which lead to negative actions.

Much of our understanding of spirituality comes from mystic beliefs. Mysticism is the altered state of consciousness where the individual is transported into a state of ecstasy with the feeling of being on a higher plain of consciousness. Some of these states can lead to self-transformation if an insight can be extracted from the experience.

There appears to be three of these states, one which appears universal and the others subjective and the last one needs to be put in context with the individual's culture and experiences.

The universal religious experience is indeterminate of any creed and common to all. It manifests itself as a state of bliss and transports the individual to a state of oneness. The emotional feeling is intense and individuals can feel they are in an encounter with the divine.

The second state is one where we are uplifted and transported by the sublime, in nature, the arts, by sensuality or thinking. We can feel inspiring awe, a sense of grandeur, power and veneration. Again we transcend our reality onto a different plain of experience. This can make a lasting impression and may be difficult to replicate.

The third state is where we can gain insight into our creativity and awareness of self through taking certain drugs or being in a certain mental state. Outcomes will depend largely on moods, situations, personality and character traits. This state can also be divided into two parts. This first has the possibility to release our creativity, where we break the bounds of control and allow our minds the freedom to explore the endless possibilities of creation and creating. Thus transforming the world around us, heightening our senses, and giving us the ability to explore and communicate with the natural world from a range of perspectives. The second induced state is where individuals have the opportunity to discover aspects of themselves, unfortunately the negative aspects which can lead to psychosis often predominates. Having extreme anxiety in these conditions can lead to personality disintegration, a falling to pieces, and a fragmentation of the person. For any real exploration a qualified and experienced guide is essential. Exploration of self in this situation has to be controlled within a tight safe structure.

This is only one part of our spiritual nature. Part of being conscious is knowing who we are, recognising our personality, character traits and the roles we undertake. To gain more information about our identity is to analyse how we interact with others in a wide range of situations, also recognising that we are all multi-

skilled and unique in our potential. We should work towards understanding our own natures and individual differences and recognise them in others. It is important that we realise our own potential and help others realise theirs. Being aware how we impact on others and the impact they make on us, recognising that different situations elicit different responses. Being flexible to deal with the changes and able to adapt to new situations. Developing a truthful dialogue with ourselves and with others, learning to convey what we are trying to communicate more directly. Working to become a fully conscious individual, a person of self-knowledge.

Looking forward and placing ourselves in the future or placing too much emphasis on the past, displaces the self and it is the present self that should be our main focus. The past and future are tools to help us understand where we are now. We shouldn't immerse ourselves in other people, animals, objects, and ideas that take us away from exploration of our reality. It is through analysis of people, animals, objects and ideas that we can move towards realising our conscious self, which in turn helps us understand our identity. Each individual is the point of existence, their journey helps to realise a greater consciousness. We can only start self-realisation with the present, the moment in which we find ourselves, for that is the only constant in our lives. No matter how much the moment changes, it is always the present. We must recognise that we often reflect on the past but probably through a distorted vision. For example, three people who have experienced a situation some thirty odd years later will probably recall the situation in surprisingly different ways, making it difficult to know what actually happened. In many ways this doesn't matter, what is important is what the individual learned about themselves and others through this experience. What it means to them.

It is assumed that we live in a real world but for all our knowledge we still don't have a perception of reality that is convincing. Philosophers, scientists and artists spend years grappling with this concept. All we really know is that we live in a conscious universe, one of probably many universes. Whether they are all conscious or have different dynamics is unknowable at present. We do know some things about our own universe though and realise that there are many things that lie hidden from our perception. To truly understand the layers of different realities we must start from our multifaceted selves. Looking at what is universal to all human beings, like the concept of justice, conscience, compassion, love creativity, reasoning and problem solving, to name but a few. These are the core of our spirituality, for many of these facets are a mystery, we have them but they are not generally explored. For example when we talk of justice it is usually in the context of law, when talking about conscience, individuals become judgmental saying of other people that they don't have one. People often say that they are not creative or don't know how to reason and work through issues, dismissing the importance of these valuable tools, by not realising how they can be used to understand themselves and their existence. The key to developing our consciousness is to be aware of the importance of these skills and learn how to use them more effectively.

If we understand that each person lives in an isolated state, giving them the ability to become both observer and participant, then we can begin to look at different aspects of consciousness. Also, if we can see that each individual life is a unique journey that gives endless possibilities to shape its own world, then we can take responsibility for our actions. How we shape our existence is a combination of balancing and understanding our spirituality, the impact we make on our environment and the living things that exist in it. It is difficult to take responsibility until we truly know what we are responsible for.

To start the process, we need to fully understand our intrapersonal skill level. This is the ability to pose question and answers through our thinking. It is the dialogue we develop to validate our perceptions of reality. It is a method of dealing with difficult and problematic issues that seem impossible to resolve. There are the daily problems to be resolved in all the different aspects of our lives. The most efficient and effective way of dealing with them is to pigeonhole them, separating them from the whole. Prioritise them in order of urgency and examine the problem as a whole unit, before breaking it down into its component parts. Whether the issue is personal, practical or abstract, the important part is to look at the many sides of the problem and the impact it makes on your own life, before extending it to include others. Problems are there to be resolved, not to dwell on. Within the process a range of options will materialise and choices become available. It means taking responsibility for the chosen action with the caveat that if it was the wrong choice,

then other options are still available. If the situation changes radically, start the process again. It means that you are in control of your own life, shaping it to meet your immediate needs without infringing on others.

Justice

Time should be given to processing aspects of our spirituality. An inventory of our knowledge around justice for example will reveal the extent of our own perception. What we understand about fairness, what in the past has made us feel cheated or robbed, what situations in our consciousness are manifestly unfair. It is worthwhile reflecting that what is unfair to one person may not be unfair to another, each individual circumstance is unique. The incident may be small or large, that is irrelevant as it is the impact it has made on us that we should process. Unfairness leads to righteous anger and if not expressed and rectified, can lead to bitterness and vindictiveness with an individual wanting revenge. I put it forward that much of anti-social behaviour can be found in individuals' perceived sense of unfairness. By examining the circumstances of the unfair treatment, questioning and answering the different aspects of the situation, not only do we begin to own it but can see it in many different lights. Families and society are quick to punish what is perceived as anti-social behaviour, rather than discover the motivation for this action. Law doesn't deal with justice, it interprets laws made by governments. Laws are made by society to fit all, where the individual has become lost. It is therefore imperative that each individual develops their own consciousness of justice. By processing perceived injustices we will be able to deepen our own understanding of what it means to be fair. This will determine the decisions that we make in the future as we begin to understand that fairness isn't just related to ourselves but to everything in the universe.

Conscience

Another pillar of spirituality is conscience, which should tell us when our behaviour has impacted others in a negative way. Conscience has a real value to our spiritual awakening and needs to be developed and understood. When we have acted in a way that has affected others perversely we need to explore and understand the motivation of our actions. Our conscience is a wonderful mechanism for helping us grow, it is a receptacle for past negative behaviour. We have no need to forgive ourselves if we have learned by the experience. We cannot go back and alter our behaviour but we can recognise what we have done and ensure the same situation doesn't arise again. We may ask forgiveness of others but our real strength and rehabilitation comes from recognising our actions and the impact they have had on others, including the environment and other living organisms. We have no need to beat ourselves with guilt once we have taken responsibility for our actions and don't repeat them. If we ignore our conscience then we cannot fully understand the impact of our actions.

Inner World

Another area of our spirituality is the inner world which has many different aspects, some we are familiar with and others less so. Within the inner worlds are a range of different dynamics and purposes. The areas we are going to explore are not definitive but are ones we can access, such as creativity, dreaming, fantasy, well of loneliness, regression, hall of light, time stop, infinity of darkness, reasoning (intrapersonal), negativity, memories, stored knowledge, emotional store, traumatic experiences, identities, stereotypes, archetypes, roles, personalities, characters etc. Each area can be separated and understood within its own term. Regression is perhaps one of the most difficult to access because the individual must allow themselves to be free of inhibitions. We keep tight control and giving ourselves the freedom to explore the unknown is frightening. In regression it is always important to have a guide who keeps in touch with your progress all the time, in case we need to retreat rapidly back to the present. In our minds are a multitude of levels which can be accessed by descending and at each level are a range of doors which we can choose to enter. Behind each door is an experience that can be relived. As observers, we can watch ourselves with clarity in the actual situation understanding our thinking and emotional response of that time. It is not a recalled memory but an actual reliving of the event, not as we may remember it but as it was. The choice of doors and levels usually relate to past traumas that have lain dormant but inhibit our development, and this exploration gives

us an opportunity to confront and resolve these problems and fears. There are unknown traumas manifesting themselves as monsters that may have to be confronted, this can be extremely frightening but can also bring tremendous reward when resolved. It is possible to go back before birth but the individual is likely to find themselves in unknown territory.

Dreaming has a dynamic all of its own, quite different from the world we know. In our dreams we process a lot of our anxieties, subconsciously trying to make sense of daily problems. The dreaming world can seem very frightening with strange tensions emanating from situations that seem totally surreal. It helps us manage our fears by taking us through a process that distances us from our daily existence. Recurring dreams can be analysed, sometimes as a message, reassurance or acknowledgement from someone in the past. It is possible to participate in dreams and explore this unique world.

Fantasy thoughts are a way we can experience situations without the complications of real personal or environmental interactions. It is also an escape from the present reality allowing the individual to explore desires or needs. Processing fantasies enables the person to explore hidden emotional drives and, through that self-awareness, stop them from manipulating others. Sexual manipulation occurs in a wide range of activities, often with negative outcomes with people becoming emotionally traumatised. It is also a mechanism for escaping this world into another, allowing for temporary relief from stressful situations. A positive aspect of fantasy is that different roles and characters can be explored within multiple situations, before choosing them to be enacted in reality.

Creativity is a powerful tool for bringing to light new concepts and developing established ideas. It gives society and individuals the ability to speculate on different ways they can shape the world. Putting new ideas into the creative forms we have established allows for a reflective process and intelligent discussions to question and answer the impact they may have on our world. It is important that everyone can develop their own visions for the future and freely discuss them with others. Society also needs a consensual vision which would enable structures to be implemented to fulfil the vision's objectives. Creativity should impact on all area of life, offering new ways to resolve difficult problems. Innovation is driven by creativity and society needs to respect the importance its role plays in every aspect of our lives. Creativity has the power to transcend all worlds. It also allows us to find hidden truths about ourselves, society and the universe. It has the power to transform and shape everything we do.

There is a well of loneliness inside every human spirit, a grey pit of despair. A world of retreat when life becomes too much to bear. The solitude and silence of this world, where everyday reality is cut off, can be a double edged sword. First as a retreat for a way of coping with a traumatic situation and secondly a door to suicide.

The hall of light which, when reached, is a place of meditation, another world which allows individuals to find peace and solitude. There is another inner world where time itself can be stopped allowing for an infinite amount of reflective thought. Here time is frozen and free range of thoughts can be explored without time constraints.

There is a darkness that reaches into infinity, a black void that has no boundaries and is, as yet, beyond our comprehension. It is easy to get lost in this world and drift in nothingness. Everything we currently know, externally and internally lies within this darkness and everything within this void creates their own boundaries and dynamics.

Within each individual are a multiple range of personalities, we mainly communicate just one to alleviate confusion. This is similar to identities, we can change or modify them, but again this inhibits communication.

Our memories are a store of information, filing and categorizing is important in enabling us to access bits that we need. Many individuals have information drifting and consequently cluttering their thinking. By

compartmentalizing our thoughts and being able to retrieve information as required, we can effectively resolve problems as they occur, without the stress of trying to tackle all problems at the same time. This skill of separating and having an effective filing system is immeasurably helpful in developing a holistic view of ourselves and the worlds we live in.

Outer World

We have only just begun to have some understanding of the outer world and its physical reality. Just as we travel to various parts of our inner world, then we will travel to areas of the universe, physically and mentally. We are just beginning to understand the limitation of our knowledge, as the discovery of new dimensions will radically change the way we think and how we view our lives.

We have the ability to shape our world in a myriad of ways, the building blocks are all around us just waiting to be assembled. Alternatives to the status quo are within us all. If we become part of the acceptance world without thinking about our impact on this planet, then negative impulses dominate.

To enhance our abilities to see ourselves from outside the body and for unlimited universal travel, we will have to develop our 'out of body' skills. This is a state where we can see ourselves which will help us realise how other people observe us. This realisation is especially helpful to individuals who have a strong misconception of how they look and the attitude they reveal to others. It is also possible in this state to explore and observe both our world and the universe.

Nature

We should recognise that the universe is a sentient being full of mysteries that we have yet to comprehend. There are many different forces in the natural world that we need to embrace and many levels of communication. For example, we all have an animal, plant, tree, rock, bird and insect spirit which helps us communicate with the natural world. Mine happen to be the spirit of an elephant, poppy, silver birch, robin, ruby and ladybird. Recognition of these spirits enables us to commune with the natural world on many different levels. It also develops our empathy with the world around us and stimulates endless curiosity for the different complexities that exist in our fascinating environment. As part of this conscious universe, their contribution and wellbeing is essential to maintain the crucial balance for development. Changing an environment without evaluating its impact on the natural world creates systemic damage.

Reasoning/Knowledge

For each individual the past holds keys to the present. Studying our own history with the ability to contextualize our lives will enable us to understand our motivations, actions and values. Information of how the past was shaped not only within our own families, but nationally and internationally enables us to recognise important trends in human development. Individual facts are not as important as an awareness of how these developments have influenced human behaviour. It is looking at history holistically that increases our consciousness.

The importance of intra-personal skills in forming valid conclusions about the past is central to understanding our history.

Healing

The ability to heal oneself and others both mentally and physically. To discover the dynamics of a range of therapies that can be used for healing ourselves. Exploring how the natural world heals itself and the balance it seeks to maintain. Exploring the healing properties of the natural world in conjunction with our own manufactured compounds to understand their efficacy and effect. Working towards a balanced existence.

Love and compassion

The most important state of being is to love and care for oneself. If we are able to understand the ramifications and importance of self-love and care it will enable us to love and care for others without inhibitions. There are four main areas of love, the familial, sensual, humanitarian and platonic. The commitment we make to each of these areas will determine our actions. In all relationships there must be checks and balances, unconditional love can be masochistic, feeding an individual's need rather than developing a sharing loving relationship. Tough love needs to be imposed where necessary to modify behaviour. Unrequited love needs to be channeled into positive actions. Realising that individuals whose actions are anti-social have a lack of self-love and project their inner anger onto their families, friends and society. Instead of being judgmental we should look for reasons behind anti-social behaviour and work to modify that behaviour rather than punish it.

Recognition of our sensual self, creating the opportunities for development to a higher physical and mental level. Developed sensuality can lead to a new spiritual plain that transcends the physical.

A humanitarian approach to living enables us to feel compassion for others and seek to resolve conflicts within our societies.

Love of beauty in all its many forms transcends the common place and encourages us to view life in a more positive way.

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Novel:

In search of spirituality

I started this novel in response to being asked about my own spirituality and became aware that most people were quite vague about their own spirituality or its meaning. I was explaining to people about a definition of spirituality and the ten basic pillars that made up the whole. Further question followed and I was asked many times what the process entailed. It occurred to me that it would be more helpful if I put it into a novel and demonstrated the recognition and developmental stage for each area of spirituality.

The novel explores ten areas of spirituality through four individuals' journeys from their dystopian world to new realities. As they discover themselves and each other, their thinking radically changes, enabling them to shape and give their world a positive meaning. Spirituality is defined as things we don't know, things that are a mystery to our understanding, such as conscience, consciousness, justice etc. As the characters begin to understand these different types of spirituality their changing consciousness of reality manifests itself through their actions.

The novel opens with four actors staging productions that no one is listening or watching. The city they inhabit is full of foreign conversations and busy people wrapped in their own lives. Frustrated by their stage performances being ignored they leave the city into unknown territory. They procure a horse, converted car adapted as a wagon, a goat and a quantity of animal food which is edible for human consumption. As they proceed through a monotonous and desolate environment they explore an issue each day, taking on characters, which they explore during their trek and perform a scenario each evening. This challenge involves them questioning themselves and their relationship with each other. In time they reach a city which has been totally destroyed; in their search for any life they meet two old women who left their city years ago and have formed a new life. They introduce the actors to a range of cultured mushrooms which sustain them, also with berries that they collect. During the visit the actors take hallucinogenic mushrooms, each one having a different experience which change their lives. They begin to question reality, identity and the

reasons for living. As the novel proceeds the characters, with each new piece of awareness, begin to change how they interact with each other and their environment. Their encounter and communication with a forest of dying trees makes them aware of having responsibility for the environment and the selfishness of constantly looking inwards at their own needs. From there they meet a tribe of people whose life is ruled by conformity and who communicate through thoughts. Realising that this is skill that some of the actors have been developing, they are able to read a section of the tribes thoughts whilst they are asleep. Escaping from a dangerous situation they begin to question all their thoughts and actions, leading towards understanding their own spirituality. Their different paths and levels of awareness bring them into conflict with each other.

During this period we are informed that there are two other parties involved, the first are the city computers who have manipulated the actors to have eyes on the alien world outside the city boundary. The other is a watcher who verifies and comments on all actions in this world, reflects and gives credence to life's existence. The group, who are now travelling along independent spiritual paths, meet three old individuals who have dedicated their lives to a particular aspect of the world: one the exploration of the universe, another the inner world and the third a comprehensive political structure where people take individual responsibility for all they do. The old people wish to explore their environment but are blocked by a group of masked people who rush them every time they venture on their land. The actors, using their skills, make masks identical to those of the tribe and join them. They are eventually accepted and the actors are eager to share their new found knowledge but are constantly rebuffed. In time as they learn about this new culture they find a method of communication which allows the people to remove their masks. As time passes and they help the tribe to develop a new understanding of themselves, they eventually suggest a trip to travel the unexplored land. With new gained knowledge and deeper awareness of themselves they decide to return to their city. As they retrace their steps, the computer not wanting them to return, disables their vehicle locking in all their supplies and kills the horse and goat. Undaunted they find ways to complete their journey home, realising the power that the computers had over them. On their return they hope to convince their fellow city dwellers that there are alternatives to the world they are living and not relying blindly on technology.