

Ruslan Zhukovets

Keys to Awareness

The master of it anticipates things that are difficult while they are easy, and does things that would become great while they are small. All difficult things in the world are sure to arise from a previous state in which they were easy, and all great things from one in which they were small.

Tao Te Ching

To understand means to simplify.

A. and B. Strugatsky

Translator's Foreword

Dear reader, you are about to read the wonderful book dedicated to work with attention and awareness by Sufi Master Ruslan Zhukovets. As the book contains quite detailed description of the attention and awareness techniques and, in fact, guidelines for the novices, the main task of our translation work has been to convey the author's ideas as accurately as possible. Many of the terms used in the book are overfilled with various controversial meanings in the modern spiritual literature. These terms and definitions can be found in the glossary so that any ambiguity will be eliminated. We recommend starting with the glossary.

N. Shcherbakova, A. Polishchuk.

Glossary

Self-control	Self-control means the process of the mind controlling man's actions, reactions and even thoughts.
Example of self-control	I need to get to the station and catch the train, but my leg hurts a little. So I am walking fast enough to catch the train and am consciously putting less weight on the leg in pain. I have put on a neutral face, trying to limp less so that nobody could understand that my leg hurts. In other words, I am controlling or at least trying to control the entire process.

<p>Level of self-control</p>	<p>If I can control my actions all the time, it is a good level of self-control.</p> <p>If I can control myself all the time even when I am talking, it is a good level of self-control.</p> <p>If I retain my self-control even during a conflict I have been involved in, it is excellent as it demonstrates a good level of self-control.</p> <p>If my self-control is irregular, and I often lose and forget about it, it is a low level of self-control.</p>
<p>Observation</p> <p>Watching</p> <p>Witnessing</p>	<p>It is a detached and non-involved perception of your internal processes in the body, emotions or mind with no participation or interference.</p> <p>For instance, observing how the chest moves when you breathe.</p> <p>For instance, observing your fury.</p> <p>For instance, observing a compulsive idea in your mind.</p>
<p>Awareness, getting aware</p>	<p>Awareness is the process of dividing your attention into two parts: one is directed at taking the action while the other one is dedicated to observation of your physical, emotional and mental sensations occurring during the action. In the beginning, you can only trace your physical sensations, but the scope of observation gets wider as long as your awareness grows.</p>
<p>Example of awareness</p>	<p>I need to get to the station and catch the train, but my leg hurts a little. So I am walking and observing my legs: I feel the toes, feet and ankles and the entire system of the muscles used to shift weight from one leg to the other one, to push off the ground and to make a step. I am also observing pain sensations in one leg. I feel my face muscles while walking, but I am not taking any part in the facial expression. I am also observing my limp and catching a glimpse of the desire to limp less so that nobody will notice. A thought runs through my head: I seem to be walking to the train station and taking all these complicated actions with my legs that require coordination and balance, and I also seem to be observing the same process without any interference with walking (I am observing this thought as well). Thus, my attention is divided into two parts.</p>

Levels of awareness	<p>The level of awareness means the quantity (volume) and stability of the attention of the person participating in the observation.</p> <p>If I can keep observing myself, it is a good level of awareness.</p> <p>If I can observe myself all the time even when I am talking, it is a good level of awareness.</p> <p>If my self-observation does not disappear even during a conflict I have been involved in, it is excellent as it demonstrates a good level of awareness.</p> <p>If my self-observation is irregular, and I often lose and forget about it, it is a low level of awareness.</p>
Self-control (2)	Thus, self-control is a surrogate (imitation) of awareness.
Human inferior bodies	<p>In functional terms, there are the following human inferior bodies (from inferior to superior ones):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical body - Etheric (or emotional) body - Body of the mind
Human superior bodies	The books means the Body of Awareness.
Physical body	That is a human body with all of its internal physical processes.
Etheric (or emotional) body	The etheric body means the energy body of a human where emotions appear, where the energy centers (chakras) helping us feel the non-physical energies are located.
Body of the mind, the mind	It is a part of the human internal space where thinking is performed. There is a conscious mind and the subconsciousness.
Consciousness, body of consciousness	It is the energy of the human consciousness (body of consciousness). It gives life to all the other inferior bodies.
Emotions	There are five independent emotions: joy, fury, sadness, fear, and anxiety.
Sensations	It mostly means sensations of the physical body.

Feelings	They are a comprehensive structure made of ideas, emotions and sensations in the physical body.
Conscious	A conscious person is the one who has the sufficient volume of attention so that it will be present in the processes taking place in all the human inferior bodies. It helps the person get rid of the automatic (unconscious) reactions of the mind and the etheric body.
Awareness (2) Decoupling	In terms of the listed human inferior bodies, awareness means allocation (separation) of part of the attention into a sort of center beyond the above mentioned bodies. As a result of the awareness, a part of the attention (the observer) observes both the physical body and emotions and the mind simply because it is detached and cannot help observing.
Unawareness, unconsciousness Coupling	Unawareness, unconsciousness means the state opposite to awareness, when the attention is not divided and merges with the sensations of the physical body, current emotion or feeling or thoughts/ideas. At this moment, man identifies himself with the physical body, current emotion or thoughts/ideas. Most people spend most of their time in such condition.
Unconscious action	An unconscious action means the action taken without division of your attention, when man's entire attention is located in one or several inferior bodies. For instance, during a fight, one person is furious and shouts at the other person (all the attention merges with the fury). On the contrary, the person being shouted at cries (all the attention merges with the fear and resentment). That is because self-control is not awareness (it is merely a surrogate), and the self-controlled action is still unconscious.
Seeker	The Seeker is the person looking for the knowledge or the Truth. Since the true knowledge can only be gained from your own experience, there are spiritual practice systems that help man understand how his bodies are structured and function (Man's Truth) and how he interacts with God, which results in awareness of His reality (awareness of God's Truth).
Path	The Seeker goes through a number of states and internal transformation processes in the context of spiritual and mystic growth.

Ego	Ego means the structure in the mind that has been created to survive among and interact with humans. Ego (personality) means what man demonstrates to the people around, i.e. the set of information on himself, his achievements and so on. There are different modifications of ego (sub-personalities) in different social environments: man acts one way with his parents, another way with his friends and so on.
Subconsciousness	Part of the mind that is not controlled by the conscious thinking process of man.
Suppression	Displacement of (usually) negative experiences from the conscious part of the mind into the unconscious one.
Conditionalism	Acquired artificial restriction at any opportunity that it is internally perceived by man as an inviolable rule.
Enlightment	Enlightment is gained, on the one hand, by the complete connection of the individual Consciousness body with the inferior bodies and, on the other hand, by the energy transformation of the inferior bodies occurring upon receipt of the superior (Divine) energies in response to the man's efforts in the spiritual and mystic practices.
Divine Will Following God's Will	The Divine Will may be shown to man in several forms, either as an instruction or hint, or as an impulse of the energy similar to the energy of the human desire albeit of different quality. Following the Will is a stage of the Sufi Path where man enters the stage of refusal from his own will (desires) for the sake of performance of the Divine Will. This is how the transition to the life with no desires, to another level of the human being, is achieved.
Seeing	Seeing is a synonym to awareness and can sometimes mean the practice of spiritual contemplation.
Self-recollection	One of the methods for developing awareness.

1.

One way or another, each Seeker strives to change their own being and convert the opportunities each person potentially has. In this search, the Seeker must go beyond the scope of the animal nature inside and reach out to the things rooted in the Divine. Subject to the culture, this part of the human being has different names, one of which is soul. I call this supreme part of the human nature “consciousness”.

For the sake of simplicity, we will consider man as a being having several layers: the layer of a physical body followed by the layer of emotions and the layer of mind. The fourth supreme level in this arrangement is consciousness. The lower levels are subordinated to the higher ones. Thus, the body is subordinated to emotions quite rigidly while emotions are inferior to the mind and its desires. Consciousness is a separate element of this chain as man does not generally feel its manifestations.

Everyone is aware of their body, emotions and mind as well as their functions to a certain extent. Another thing is how consciousness works and acts as a separate power contained in man. The experience is that most people perceive consciousness and awareness as the ability to purposefully think about something without any effort and perceive the surrounding world quite clearly at the certain moment. In other words, man’s feelings and mind are somehow balanced and peaceful, so he can concentrate easily while perception is not blurred by any emotions. Putting this another way, when man says, “I am conscious”, he means the ability to concentrate and clearly perceive what is happening. In this case, clear consciousness means the ability to fully control yourself; the opposite is psychosis or affective state. If man can say what day of the week it is, he is aware of what is happening. But then consciousness is derived from the mind, which in its turn is the effect of electrical chemical processes in the human brain.

Accordingly, the mind is the supreme level of the ordinary human state of being. It seems to be both the basis of consciousness and apex of creation, and the so called ego, the personality that makes man different from the others and helps develop “individuality”, is created therein. That is why there is a sort of confusion in concepts and understanding of what is happening in and to man since the mind and consciousness are equated. For the same reason, many people practicing meditation believe that the meditative state is only reached when their mind gets somehow calmer, and try to make it silent. They have no idea that they are merely trying to impose a sort of control over their mind at that time.

Consciousness has the nature being absolutely different from the body, mind and emotions. Its nature is eternal Light, the Divine Glow. It can be called the Divine Spark or a soul; the name will never change its eternal essence. When God created the world in the image and likeness of himself, he gave Consciousness to all the live beings. The inanimate nature also has some of His Consciousness, but it is concealed even deeper there.

So, each of us has some Divine Consciousness, which is tiny in contrast to the Whole, but is more than enough for us to live in this world. The quality of our consciousness is equivalent to the quality of God’s Consciousness, but we do not find it evident as it is hidden by manifestations of our inferior bodies.

Consciousness with regard to the mind, emotions and physical body has the power similar to the one God has over its creation. However, man is deprived of this power because his being is ruled by the mind.

Nature programs the human being for approximately until the age of 21. During this period, the physical body, emotions and mind are developed and get mature. After they are established, development stops, and we treat it as a natural thing. The laws of nature are in fact the static manifestation of His Will, and they mean that the mechanical program will be developing us up to the specific moment, following which we will be able to survive and propagate our kind. The program stops here. Starting from this moment, subsequent growth takes continuous efforts. That is when we *must* go beyond the limits of the development level set for us by the laws of nature.

2.

It is quite easy to check whether our consciousness exists regardless of the mind. To start with, open your eyes and look at your palm. If you take it closer to your eyes, it will block the entire view. If you move it back, you will see the whole palm. If you pull it close to your eyes, nothing will be visible. In other words, there must be some distance between the person looking and the thing he or she is looking at to actually see. It is an essential condition.

Now let's close our eyes. Can we see our body from the inside? Yes, we do. Such observation of the body from the inside will differ from the outside, but it is possible. It means that there is an interval, some distance between the body and the center from which we look at it. We can monitor our emotions and thoughts the same way. If it is possible, it means the source of our vision is beyond the mind, emotions and body; otherwise, it could not be observed. Consciousness is this very source.

3.

While observing our mind, we are *conscious* of our thoughts. The immediate ideas get clearer, and we can perceive the thoughts that were in there, but beyond our scope of attention.

Attention is merely a function of consciousness the same way as contraction is a function of muscles or thinking is a function of the mind.

Have you ever seen a cat watching a pigeon? Its attention is fully focused and undivided. However, a cat has no mind in the human meaning (neither does a pigeon). But it has consciousness.

Attention conveys the energy of consciousness, which moves in the direction of our attention. The power of the energy of attention is very strong. According to the quantum physics, movement of elementary particles changes when they are being observed by scientists.

I think everyone knows the power of human attention. Everyone has felt another person's glance similar to physical pressure. This is that very energy of attention focused on us from the inside, which we can feel quite clearly. People are known to have put the others into trance with the power of their look, and there are legends of the warriors paralyzing their enemy by just looking at him. All these miracles would be impossible but for the power of the energy of attention, namely consciousness.

The attention directed outwards is usually associated with five senses. When we pay attention to what we see, hear, feel etc., we get impressions and information processable by our mind by such means. In his ordinary state, man perceives all his impressions through the prism of his mind, which immediately verbalizes them inside by launching the process of associative reactions related both to emotions and the body. For instance, if a thirsty man sees water, he will feel relieved (because he will be able to satisfy his desire) and glad, and will swallow automatically.

This way or another, consciousness contacts internal and external objects by means of attention focused on them. When they get within the field of attention, they are influenced by the full force of the energy of consciousness. Also, our consciousness is capable of *coupling* with any objects it perceives.

4.

We would not exist if we did not have this consciousness, this Divine Spark, at all. Our inferior bodies would have no main engine, main source of energy, the only link between us and the Source of Everything. Consciousness is an essential element of existence while the body, emotions and the mind are merely tools. Consciousness itself is also a tool, a tool of Creation, which allows attributing a soul to the matter.

While Creating, God gave his Consciousness to both living and inanimate matter to a greater or lesser extent. Due to this, God's Will and connections among all the beings manifest themselves via Consciousness dissolved in the matter. Any respectable mystic can confirm that there are certain states of consciousness in

which the surrounding material world is suddenly perceived as sheer glow of the Divine Consciousness to the looker's amazement.

5.

Let's imagine a glass of water where a spoon of salt has been dissolved. When dissolved, salt seems to be gone soon, we cannot see it, but water turns salty. In this case, the properties of salt turn into the properties of water to some extent, but they still are different substances. Consciousness is dissolved in or coupled with different bodies of man in a similar way. If the water evaporates, the spoon of salt will remain at the glass bottom and preserve its properties. The same happens to consciousness when man passes away. However, the process of disengagement of consciousness in its initial form may be carried out without destruction of the physical and other bodies. One must develop *awareness* inside to reach this goal. It develops as man learns how to manage his attention by focusing a part of it on continuous observation of how his mind, emotions and body work. On the one hand, such observation changes the state of the inferior bodies by eliminating different disorders and abnormalities and harmonizing their interaction. On the other hand, it commences the *decoupling* of consciousness from them. This process encourages crystallization of consciousness as a separate center.

When consciousness is fully crystallized, and decoupling is absolute, all its traits and abilities can be expressed with all their inherent beauty and power. Then the surrounding people start to perceive such being as something incredible and amazing as they think of different explanations, which are not always reasonable. The reason is that they have difficulty seeing and understanding how divine the nature of our consciousness is.

6.

Consciousness is closely interrelated with the mind, emotions and body. In their turn, they are also tied together. In his ordinary state, man's consciousness always couples with one of these bodies. Consciousness performs coupling by *absorbing* the object it merges with through attention. Then consciousness sort of *turns into* what it is coupling with. If it is fear, it mingles with it; if it is a desire, consciousness becomes identical to it. When it mingles with fear, consciousness endues it with its power, making it resistless. It is one of the main phenomena of human life: as he is ignorant of his nature, man has no idea that he himself gives power to all the negative emotions, obsessions and destructive desires...

Thus, consciousness feeds the human inferior bodies of animal nature on its energy, the same way as God's Consciousness maintains existence of all the worlds.

The *coupling* creates the basis of unconsciousness, and guidance of the mind filled with various "bright" ideas making it suppress the emotions, desires and body crowns it all. The more man has coupled, the more he is *absent*, because he is not inside himself at that very moment: a desire, an idea or an emotion with which his consciousness has coupled is there. This desire, idea or emotion constitutes man then; that is what he becomes at that moment.

The mind trying to call the shots pushes so many desires and emotions deep into subconsciousness that the man's unconscious part reaches the incredible size. As a result, the unconscious starts putting continuous pressure and influencing the so called conscious. Still, the conscious is only the part of the mind, emotions or physical body where man's attention now is, which his consciousness has coupled with.

The suppressed may not be manifested, so it is ignored. The mind turns a blind eye to the suppressed, it wants to see, feel or know nothing about them. As consciousness has deeply coupled with the mind, attention naturally follows the things the mind focuses on. That is why it stays away from the areas of suppressed desires and emotions. Impenetrable darkness reigns there until man endeavors to pay attention to them.

7.

Emotions are known to be faster than the body, and the mind is faster than emotions. One can say that the speed of emotional vibrations is lower than the speed of mind vibrations. Therefore, it manages to suppress emotions and desires that may not be expressed in an eye blink. It happens so fast that man notices nothing in most cases. When he has high blood pressure or feels depressed after a while, he turns out to be incapable of understanding its causes. His mind acts based on the conditionalism and resulting limitations, so it cannot see the product of its own actions to itself. Consciousness is the only thing that can see. But its attention follows fluctuations and leaps of the mind the same way as chicks follow the hen. So there is

nobody to see how the mind fulfilling its inherent programs, which contradict the natural processes and human physiology, paves the way for all kinds of disorders, discomfort and suffering.

Man's ignorance often mentioned by mystics is partly expressed by his continuous efforts to do something with his body instead of dealing with the mind, which makes him suffer all the time this or that way.

8.

At the same time, consciousness is much faster than emotions and mind taken together. It can couple with different things by shifting from one object to another with incredible speed. I believe this speed is higher than the speed of light.

Man cannot see a bullet in the air as its speed exceeds his perception abilities considerably. As a bullet is so fast in its movement, man cannot see it even when it hits his body, so it always seems to the mind that there has never been any consciousness at all for the similar reason.

9.

So, it is absolutely evident that man in his ordinary state has bad command of his energy of attention. Although every child was forced to focus on the studied material at school, the effect was often the opposite. Instead of learning how to manage his or her attention, the child developed the reaction of extreme reluctance to studies and disregard of any personal development efforts.

It sometimes seems that many of the present-day young people have a great aversion for reading books only because they have spent eleven years in the secondary school.

Man's attention is generally subordinated to his desires and fears as well as the impulses that instantaneously occur in the body as sensations, in the mind as ideas etc. Man himself can manage these processes in part only (and any way under the influence of the desire or fear), but supposes erroneously that he actively manages and participates in the switch of attention.

A small experiment is enough to make sure that we cannot hold our attention. Let's close our eyes and observe our breathing. We can observe how air touches our nostrils at the inhale or how it fills the chest and goes off at the exhale. At the same time, we must hold attention on observation of breathing without letting it get distracted. Our task is to remember about the observation, and at the same time not to float far away together with the flow of our thoughts. I think if man has not practiced such things before, he will not last even a minute and forget about his decision to observe how he inhales and exhales. This experiment is perfect demonstration of how we can control our attention and manage our inner world.

10.

We cannot hold our attention steadily for a long time beyond the ways it is used to. It is a fact. The mechanical nature of our psychoemotional reactions and the continuous coupling of our consciousness with them deprives us of the ability to influence them in any way. Actually, our personality demonstrated to the people around is not represented inside of us; instead, there is a set of psychophysical processes that enable our mind to react in response to the external situations and internal irritants like a shot. We present the results of these reactions as our personality to the people around by saying "I am in a good mood today", "I feel anxious" or "Time has come to change something about my life..."

But our ego is just a tip of an iceberg, it is a final expression of what is happening in the unconscious part of our being. The mind uses the ego to rationalize internal contradictions of its conditionalism and desires and make them sort of integral. The vocation of our personality is to case-harden and consolidate the consequences of the contradicting desires existing in our mind. When one of these desires starts dominating again by affecting the man's state and actions, the ego tries to explain what is happening both to itself and the others. The man's ego often deceives him and the people around so that this explanation will look credible and convincing. When this desire gives way to another one, and the man's behavior changes accordingly, the ego finds another "logical" explanation, which is not related to what has actually happened, for instance, "it is not our fault", "life is life..."

In other words, our false self shaped by the mind is not the real decision maker. It is not the source and cause of our actions. It merely tries to maintain a semblance of the consecutive and logical nature of man's actions. Does it manage to? Recall you acquaintances and make sure that they behave at least strange pretty often. However, they do not find their actions strange and always have a "reasonable" explanation for their actions. The same way, your life seems somewhat strange to them.

11.

All you have to do to change the above state of affairs is to *wish* that. Our initial situation is that the desire is the only thing giving us an opportunity to start transformation of our being. Each of us has felt the wish to get beyond the control by emotions and desires making us suffer endlessly at least once. If you have felt this wish once, it is of no use as it is not powerful enough. If it appears from time to time and keeps gaining strength, we have a flash of hope that our fate can be changed. The stronger you desire to change your life is, the more energy you can direct for this purpose. That is the law, which cannot be circumvented. The first obstacles on this way appear when the wish to change yourself needs to be transformed into something specific and real. There are lots of spiritual practices promising various solutions of human problems. But how to choose the proper one? Even after you have made your choice, how to understand whether it is useful and drives you to the set goal, or is just a waste of time?

It is a complicated issue, generally with no answer in the beginning. The position from which man starts his search is that he can make a mistake in the very beginning, when setting the goal, i.e. the final state of being he must strive for. I have described such mistakes and their possible consequences in a series of articles called The Dark Side of Seeking.

Another difficulty is that you do not always understand what exercise you need at this very moment. What should you start with? Should you follow the ancient scriptures or purify your body or stop your mind, and how should it all be done? The modern spiritual coaches sometimes give such absurd instructions that a reasonable person has difficulty following them.

As I have already considered the first obstacle before, let's discuss practices and exercises.

12.

Any exercises prescribed on the way of mastering yourself have one goal: to master your attention. Releasing attention from the power of desires is quite difficult, but still possible.

All the exercises can be divided into active and passive ones by their essence. The passive exercises are fundamental, basic ones when it comes to awareness. The purpose of the passive exercises is to decouple consciousness from the body, mind and emotions, so the latter are not used in there. The main effort is focused on observation and witnessing.

Witnessing is manifestation of a witness the same way as an observer is associated with the concept of observation. In this case, a witness to the inner processes is our consciousness perceiving everything with detachment.

The purpose of the exercise can be observation of breathing, emotions, bodily tension etc. It does not actually matter what is within the field of our attention. First of all, the main thing is to prevent it from merging with the object of witnessing. Secondly, we must be able to hold our attention on the object of observation as long as possible without distraction.

The point is to learn how to *hold* your attention by managing it in the manner required by the corresponding method. The effort made to hold your attention helps creating a gap in its customary mechanical following of desires and emotions. It is a step to its freedom and an opportunity of its absolute mastering.

The best-known passive techniques are vipassana, zazen, and hearing. There are some other ones, for instance, the exercise of getting fully aware of different parts of the body given by Gurdjieff to his followers.

The state of awareness is also passive as we just witness external and internal situations and processes, but do not couple with them and are concurrently capable of acting in the surrounding world.

The essence of all the passive techniques is that we use only attention as a pure function of consciousness without engagement of the body, emotions and mind.

It might seem that the exercises associated with concentration of attention, during which man looks at one point or candle flame without interruption, are also passive, but this is not true. In these cases, the body is used to conduct the energy of attention, and man needs to make effort to avoid twinkling, looking away, or at least sit still. The same way, recitation of mantras, practices with koans and famous Advaita concentration on the question "Who am I?" are the active techniques engaging the mind and body as their tools.

A deep prayer is expression of our gratitude and awe which affects all the bodies at the same time. Dynamic meditations, expression of emotions, and different visualizations are all versions of the active practices. These practices always have the purpose and are used to accomplish specific tasks in the Seeker's being. They are similar to the crutches helping a cripple. Many of the active techniques are designated to

resolve certain issues faced by the Seeker on his Path and are of utilitarianistic significance only. However, those Seekers who are unaware of that and try to base their practice on such techniques fail.

Most religious traditions and paths existing in the world combine application of both active and passive techniques, often concurrently. In this case, the active techniques enable overcoming the existing obstacles and clearing our inner space for a deeper plunge into passive techniques. In the other words, targeted expression of suppressed fury that has been creating continuous pressure inside makes us a bit more relaxed, and we can go a little deeper by seeing what has been hidden behind.

The active techniques create the conditions under which our consciousness finds it easier to decouple and crystallize. The passive techniques are the process of decoupling itself and redirection of the energy from the mind and body into consciousness. The active techniques help resolve the issues in our inferior bodies whereas the passive ones harmonize them. Both types of practices supplement each other and help the Seeker reach the main goal provided that they are properly used.

13.

All the types of the exercises have only one goal: to change man's being. The change must be achieved by activation and manifestation of the supreme divine nature rooted in man rather than increased control over his inferior nature. As for the terminology I use, the state in which the supreme nature is concealed is called unconsciousness, and the one in which it is manifested is awareness.

While man's consciousness is coupled with his inferior bodies, he is unconscious, and the deeper the coupling is, the more unconscious he is.

In practice, it is as follows: man absorbs a set of ideas and views on life shaping his conditionalism in his childhood. His desires are shaped in the direct association with that conditionalism. The main emotional stereotypes remaining unchanged all man's life are established during this period.

Starting from a certain moment, the man's being turns into a sequence of standard actions and psychoemotional cliches switching instantaneously and not demanding his *conscious* participation. When man couples with the desire, he gives it control of himself; when fear arises, it turns into his master at once...

Unconscious people are *absent* in their actions although they try to conceal this fact by all means. Unconscious people are always sort of inadequate to what is happening because when they couple with one of their inner states, they cannot adequately perceive what is happening. Owing to the excessive activity of their mind, they are always in some kind of drowse. For instance, a man walks along the street. While walking, he remembers a recent conversation, TV show etc. Or he plans how to spend the nearest evening. In both cases, this mental process he has voluntarily merged with will bear images and pictures similar to the ones we see in our dreams. At the same time, he keeps walking automatically. Almost everything is done the same way, automatically. And the mind keeps day-dreaming.

Another issue faced by unconscious man is that he starts *projecting* his dreams onto the surrounding world. For instance, he is afraid of aggression and violence. In addition to making man underconfident and weak, this fear creates the situation in which every burly man *seems* dangerous. His fear will make unconscious man perceive all strong man as dangerous and threatening ones. As his fear is weakening him, almost everyone around will seem stronger. This is pure projection when the inner reality of coupling with fear creates the illusory outer reality where man has to live. As we keep projecting our inner reality of our coupling outwards, each of us travels the life through our own illusory worlds.

The strongest and steadiest projections are created by desires and fears. That is why one can see a sly liar, a semi-god or an ordinary Jew in the same man. The same event may be treated as Fate, a needless tragedy or manifestation of magical powers. But the nature of projection is the nature of dream, which appears as a product of the mind created by the imagination and memory and, therefore, has no reality of its own.

As desires and fears are intimately related to the ideas contained in the mind, the peoples affected by the common idea sometimes start seeing the same dreams. For instance, about superiority of their race to the others.

These are the consequences of the coupling and the resulting unawareness. Our happy times of thrive of incredible technologies give people vast opportunities to couple with external objects.

I recently heard a humble dervish ask his sheikh, "Please tell me how spiritually uplifted I am when watching TV. At this time, I clearly feel my ego disappear, and I seem to be dissolved." The sheikh responded kindly that such state could not be treated as spiritual one because nothing changed in the

dervish's being after that. As for me, I would add that this situation perfectly illustrates the state of the external coupling. The coupling with external objects as well as man's unconsciousness get deeper and deeper while television, computers and 3D technologies are spread wider and wider.

Therefore, awareness is based on decoupling. The conscious man's actions always have *presence* of his consciousness tied to nothing, which can see the processes taking place in the inferior bodies. Such man's perception will not be distorted or preconditioned by the mind due to no coupling; he will be free from projections and stop day-dreaming.

14.

There is a number of Seekers who have decided that if our mind prevents us from perceiving the objective reality and causes problems, we must get rid of it. Some teachers preach against it by calling it the Devil's tool and endlessly cursing the mind for its activity. As a result of their somewhat biased speeches, it seems to their followers that the main goal of their spiritual work is to "stop" and get rid of their mind.

Being a deep-cover Buddhist, Osho always spoke about the state of no-mind. What is no-mind? Approximately the same as no-chair. Or no-table. The negative statement with no trigger for the mind, 100 % Buddhist by its nature. It can be used in one direction only: getting rid of the mind.

I have met the Seekers focused on this complicated and unrewarding task. They have great difficulty doing that as they try to stop their mind by means of... their mind! The idea and desire of such stop are anchored in the Seeker's mind, which starts frenzied activity for their implementation. However, most of such Seekers have a vague idea of what will happen after their goal is reached. It seems to them that the main thing is to get rid of their mind, and then everything will happen on its own...

I have seen people suffering from the final stage of schizophrenia. This stage is characterized by the total degradation of personality, lack of desires and actual destruction and disappearance of the mind. The point is that such patients do not get enlightened. They turn into something vegetative and might even starve to death if they are not forced to eat.

The mind cannot be stopped by means of the mind because the desire of this stop itself will maintain its activity. However, the attempts to reach the "inner silence" or "stop of the inner dialog" might result in disorders and malfunctions in its activity. In this case, the brief periods when the mind manages to control itself will be followed by the state of chaos similar to insanity.

The knowledge that has been understood inadequately or gained at the wrong time often does more harm than good to its possessor. We do not have to cut our legs off to stop walking. Just stop giving power to them. If we change the balance of forces in our being so that the mind will not be the main one, and consciousness will be crystallized as a separate center, it will gradually change all the activity. We do not have to feel this or that emotion all the time. We do not have to think all the time when we are fully decoupled.

15.

Self-abnegation, which is typical of people suffering from the inferiority complex (in other words, almost everyone to a certain extent), also manifests itself in the spiritual search. Here is self-castigation, here is mortification of the flesh as a source of sin... Castration, ritual suicide and similar things are common in the history of religions. An attempt to cease the mental activity is a sort of "spiritual" acts like that. Abnegation of yourself, your body and mind has brought no one to God, but it has been a good example of what should not be done.

Yet, self-abnegation is flourishing now by resurrecting again and again in different forms in the schools of thought by new "masters".

At the same time, all you need to do is to look inside, into your mind, and find the ideas and desires making you feel non-conforming to the world, the feeling of your own deformity. But it is impossible unless you have a decoupling skill. While you are coupled with the idea claiming that you are irreparably deformed, there is nothing left but self-destruction, no matter in which manner; a "spiritual" way is even better. It is always more pleasant to be crippled for the sake of the great purpose rather than just because you cannot accept yourself as you are.

16.

What should man striving for awareness start with? The easiest way seems to be self-observation and self-awareness practices but experience has shown that it might be a very difficult start. Man who cannot

manage his attention will have difficulty dividing it into parts at once and focusing one of such parts on himself. Considering that it should be done concurrently with ordinary daily activities, it gets clear why self-observation with no preliminary preparation is practically impossible. Man physically lacks the energy of attention to retain several concurrent processes within its field. As a result, he loses self-awareness and habitually couples with one of his actions or states.

This process is inevitable in the beginning and repeatedly demonstrates that we do not possess the energy of our attention. So the best start is preparation for mastering this energy.

Any exercises used to work with attention will be of use. Any passive techniques can be used. The best active ones are those connected with concentration on the external or internal item (trataka, mantra, repeated prayers etc.). Many of the dynamic meditations, for instance, Osho's ones, are focused on work with the energies of the body, emotions and mind, so they are not very good at training management of your attention. Probably that is why many of the people who perform Osho's dynamic meditation regularly, cannot boast of the corresponding growth of awareness.

Suppose you have decided to start with observation of your breathing process (vipassana, a classic Buddhist technique). So you sit on a chair or on the floor and focus attention on how the air gets into and out of your chest. This motion can be observed at the level of nostrils or directly in the chest, it is up to you to choose. The main effort in this exercise is to observe the breathing without distraction and coupling with a flow of thoughts that keep going through the mind. One might guess easily it is quite a hard thing to do in the beginning. The habit of coupling with thoughts is so strong that you will hardly notice how quickly you will forget about observation and start thinking about other things. As soon as you recollect the purpose of your sitting, go back to the observation. Do not let your mind start condemning itself or producing the thoughts like, "I will fail." Constant dropping will wear away a stone, and any effort bears its fruit.

As for the preparation for increasing the level of awareness, the use of passive techniques is obvious: they have the same principle of getting aware, but all the attention can be directed at the observation, with no distraction for other actions. Such practice helps developing the skill of witnessing and watching. If man manages to be aware of his breathing for quite a long period of time, it is a step to permanent awareness of his body and the processes inside.

The exercises must be *daily* so that you can see the effect of your efforts. The irregular practice helps nourishing your ego, but it is of no use in increasing your awareness. The mechanic nature of human reactions is so deep that the self-awareness attempts two or three times a week will not overcome it.

17.

There is a theme of a sacrifice and willingness to make sacrifices in many religions. The meaning of a sacrifice is quite trivial: a believer must give away a part of his property to get the benefit or God's benevolence he is seeking. So to say, the meaning is straightforward. The symbolic meaning comprehended by the Seeker is that you cannot gain anything for free on your Path to the Truth. For instance, to get bliss, you must give away your sufferings, some of which you find very dear.

Some mystics make a conscious sacrifice at the price known to them only, in order to gain new opportunities in their Work. There are the ones sacrificing themselves to God in their entirety. This sacrifice gives them something that can be neither explained nor understood by those who have not done it.

18.

No man can hope that he will live the same life while getting more and more aware. The first sacrifice he will have to make for the sake of his desire to change will be his free time. His life will have to be organized so that there will be time for daily meditation sessions and exercises. If he cannot do that, it means it is too early to start this work, or he might not need it at all.

Casual attitude to self-improvement produces the same results. Lack of attention to details entails no results at all. A daily twenty-minute exercise is better than an-hour-and-a-half exercise twice a week. The one who wants to awaken and get aware needs to understand that it is work taking permanent efforts.

Some teachers recommend meditating at the same time of the day and in special clothing, by using certain music or odors in the beginning. Your mind is expected to get used to the time of the exercise, and the clothing and corresponding attributes will create the mood that will help the mind calm down faster, thus making the meditation deeper. This approach might be actually of use for some types of people, but I see two cons in there. The first one is that when your mind gets finally used to the time and the surroundings, its holder might start "sleeping" during the meditation while submerging into the state of trance. Following

which, by the way, he will feel refreshed and relaxed. But it will not be a path leading to awakening. The second con is that if the Seeker's purpose is to gain awareness, he will have to do it in ordinary life where he will have no special favorable conditions.

Thus, in my opinion, the main condition for self-improvement must be *determination*. It is the very thing enabling the Seeker to find time for exercises by using any opportunity for this purpose. In the end, it will result in man's own independent *will*.

19.

Many researchers believe that man in his ordinary state has free will. It seems to them that it is God's gift allowing man commit endless sins or, on the contrary, rise over in his sainthood. However, when you take a closer look, it turns out that the so-called will is not quite free and independent. All of its manifestations are associated with desires this way or another.

The first manifestation of the "will", a positive one, will be following the desire dominating at the given moment. For instance, a man wants to get rich. This desire will take a long time to be fulfilled. During this period of time, he will be unwavering and determined and demonstrate the wonders of hard work. The background of it all will be fits of rage and periodic depressive conditions. If he gets what he wants, his biographers will write that he demonstrated the extraordinary will during that period. Yet, we must understand that going after a desire is not a manifestation of will. The man's outer actions will create an illusion of his free will, though. If this desire is suddenly replaced with another one, all his behavior will change miraculously, and his ego will immediately find a logical explanation for that.

The second manifestation of "will" will be negative and going against desires. It is highly appreciated by the societies with the totalitarian ideology since man is capable of suppressing his personal desires for the sake of the supreme goals set by the leaders. As a matter of fact, the principal part of child-rearing in any society is to teach a child how to control his desires. The one who has mastered this skill better than the others is strong-willed while the others are weak-minded.

The more the man is preconditioned by his views on the duty to the society, the country, and his family, the more he will suppress his desires. In this case, he will look adequate and strong-willed, but sad because such manifestation of will is always accompanied by deep sorrow.

It cannot be otherwise while man's actions are guided by the mind. Under the given conditions, all the acts of "will" will be guided either by desires or their opposing conditionalism accompanied by fear. The feeling that man has free will appears out of all these interactions and oppositions rationalized by the ego.

When consciousness starts transforming into a separate center, the process of decoupling from external and internal objects itself brings the new force to life, the one independent of instantaneous desires, the will that has no connection with them and does not need them to be expressed. It results from the decoupling efforts, and the closer man is to actualization of his true Self, the stronger his will and his ability to act without connection with desires get. The more power constituting the true will man has, the more capable he is of giving it in to God and accepting His Will as man's own one.

20.

"Patience is mother of will," G. I. Gurdjieff said. In fact, it is hard to imagine how will can be developed if man has no patience. Impatience always results from a desire, the same way as the mind's need to accomplish what has been started in order to get rid of tension. This tension is caused by the unaccomplished situation or unfulfilled desire, so the mind wants to finish it off as soon as possible. That is why patience is always a forced thing in man's ordinary state of mind. We have to bear physical pain or bodily discomfort when we fall ill. We have to exercise patience when we control our negative emotions. One cannot go without patience when the mind is filled with the desire that cannot be fulfilled at once.

In other words, patience in ordinary life is always closely associated with unconscious suffering. It is the state in which we have no choice and have to go through unpleasant feelings. If we could get rid of pain, rage, sorrow or desire, we would immediately get released from them. But we are helpless, and, by taking painkillers in the broad sense, we must exercise patience until they take effect. Our suffering is unconscious because we are unaware of its source, we do not see why a certain emotion appears, and we cannot influence the situation. So we exercise patience and get irritated since we do not want to tolerate anything; we keep being sorry for ourselves. Self-development shapes another type of patience. Sportsmen and all those taking real actions to change their being know this type. The difference is that man taking a decision to do an exercise does it and bears the resulting discomfort out of *his own will*. For instance, when he starts observing

his breathing, he faces the situation when his mind deprived of any activity starts running idle frenziedly. It creates maximum noise and anxiety inside at that moment. Man faces the choice: either to keep observing the inhale and exhale or to couple with the mind and lose his observation. Since he does not want to give up on his decision because of the very first obstacle, he keeps sitting and tolerating the fuss created by his mind inside. That is his choice, *conscious suffering* he can stop any moment. Yet, he keeps sitting and sees his brain calming down gradually as it cannot get the energy of attention it is used to. At this moment, man is in the driver's seat and ceases to be a fool of circumstances.

The more efforts are exerted then, the deeper the Seeker's patience gets, and the stronger his independent will grows. His efforts in awareness result in the Seeker's *readiness* to exercise patience since the decoupling work weakens the pressure of desires, which used to be unbearable.

Impatience resulting from desires entails anxiety and hurry. When man is ready to exercise patience, he becomes relaxed and calm. Patience resulting from personal choice brings the doer special calmness and serenity. This serenity is the fruit of acceptance, readiness to accept anything that happens. Such acceptance makes man very strong and, when it comes to internal work, invincible.

Patience is the only thing preventing emotional and mental reactions from throwing the Seeker back into absolute unconsciousness. It also enables entering deeper and deeper layers of our being. It facilitates approximation to the Truth. In the end, one cannot pass even the first part of the Path without patience.

21.

In order to develop patience and will, you do not have to do passive exercises only; any will do. The regular effort expended to overcome your mechanical reactions bears necessary fruit. However, skills of passive techniques are essential to start direct work with your awareness. When there are none, the Seeker might be trapped.

A typical example of what should not be done is many followers of Osho, a very popular mystic. They read his books and perform different dynamic meditations and active exercises, which he has offered in sufficient quantities. In his books, Osho keeps talking about awareness and says the right things, but his way of presentation of the material makes the readers believe that awareness is easy and effortless to achieve, and it only takes one's desire to be achieved. This is where they get into the above-mentioned trap. As they do not have a pre-developed observation skill, they substitute witnessing with *thinking*. On learning the proper words from Osho, they keep repeating them and suppose that such super-quoting is demonstration of the high awareness level. In fact, they have not got to know themselves, and the only thing they know is what Osho said about it.

Thinking about observation and observing are not the same thing to such an extent that you do not know how to explain it. But I will try.

While witnessing is the real-time process, here and now, thinking is always retrospective. A witness watches the situation impartially whereas the mind considers the events understanding the core and assessing them. Imagine man has got in the situation he has always been afraid of and expected. When it happened, his reaction was fear. At that moment, the aware person will observe its appearance, related thoughts and cold waves flowing through the body. He *is present* in the situation and acts based on his views on the situation. Even if the mechanical response has prevailed over awareness, man will still remain a witness thereof.

The one who is unaware will *get lost* when fear appears, and will respond to the situation in a standard manner. In addition to the standard, ordinary actions, he will suppress his fear. In some time, he will think, "Yes, I was in fear, it appeared because of the psychological trauma in the childhood which..." and so on. He will feel aware and really smart. The first thing will be self-deception, and the second one – the truth. Getting aware of an emotion or desire results in gradual transformation of the being, and thinking about them creates an illusion of self-awareness.

I have seen the people whose awareness has always been within the limits of their mind, but their unconsciousness was displayed at all the levels of their being. It resulted from their thinking about self-observation, but the mind cannot understand even itself, let alone something superior.

Thinking about awareness is so common that it might be the main cause of failures by the Seekers who have not captured the difference between the activity of the mind and observation of such activity.

22.

The consciousness sees. The mind analyses, evaluates and judges what has been seen. In the end, it seems to the mind that seeing is also one of its functions. So it creates another illusion that finally locks man

in the plane of the mind because no matter where you look, there is only the mind and nothing but the mind. Perceiving the world and yourself another way, without its interference, seems impossible. Thinking seems to be an integral part of the human being. It seems that watching will never substitute thinking.

However, the mind restricted to the language's field and related dualities is never able to perceive the integral picture of the being. At the same time, consciousness is quite capable of such perception, and the knowledge gained by it during the watching is always more objective and comprehensive. Seeing directly, without intermediation of the mind, is another level of perception, but it is unavailable for those who have failed to master the art of witnessing and non-coupling. This is the only reason why smart people all around find themselves in the situations where they behave like ultimate fools.

23.

Let's suppose that the Seeker has mastered the witnessing skills to the sufficient extent and can start the practice of awareness in daily life. As I have already mentioned above, the main difficulty of this stage is to learn to *divide* attention into two parts. The first part is given to supporting the action, and the second one – to observing the acting person.

When man begins to work with his attention, he starts gaining access to the energy of the consciousness that used to feed the inferior bodies, so the volume of the attention accessible by man grows considerably. The field of attention, which can include everything, sensations and impulses coming from the body, emotional outbursts, a flow of thoughts and associations, keeps growing alongside with the decoupling... All these things can be concurrently embraced by man's attention. Moreover, growth of his sensitivity and awareness will help him perceive the things that do not exist for the coupled, "sleeping" people.

When it comes to mastering a skill or art, there is a good rule: start with simple things. Do not try to get aware of everything happening in three inferior bodies at once because you will fail. Also, it is quite unreasonable to start self-awareness from observation of the mind and its delicate movements because coupling with the mind is the deepest one, and it is too easy to make a mistake of substitution of watching with thinking about it. That is why the best start for the practice of awareness is *presence* in the physical body during any action you take.

In this case, the object of awareness can be anything: walking, washing up, any physical labor etc. The main task of the observer will be to divide attention so that one part of it will be enough to take the action properly while the other one will involve *all the sensations* experienced at that moment. The routine, ordinary action is the most suitable option.

For example, consider washing up. While doing this simple work, you can be aware of your tactile sensations, the ones you get when you touch the dishes, hot water and foam of the washing-up liquid. Moreover, you feel the smells. Also, you can feel tension in your arm muscles, the strength or weakness of their contraction. As you usually stand while you wash up, in addition to the above sensations, you can get aware of tension in the leg and back muscles as well as impact of gravitation onto your body. In this case, the tension you are aware of is of no negative, painful significance. It is just the working condition of your muscles. Furthermore, deeper awareness would let you be aware of your breathing rhythm and heartbeat.

We have these sensations all the time, but our consciousness ignores them because our attention is absorbed by thoughts and other things. As soon as you start getting aware of your sensations, the quality of your impressions changes, and you are in the *being*, in what is happening to you, instead of living in the clouds as usual.

The sensations introduced into the field of your attention enable you to get aware of the situation which your body is in. People often waste lots of energy to make basic movements, and their muscles are always tense although they can be relaxed. When man gets aware of his condition, he can change it by applying, for instance, suitable active techniques or merely by refusing from habitual movement stereotypes. By doing that, man gets more stamina and reserves the energy that used to be wasted. Now he can use this energy to do something really useful, for instance, to expand the field of his attention.

24.

In order to be better aware of your body, a helping hand may be the technique in which man in the passive state focuses his attention on getting aware of one of his body parts. Gurdjieff gave his followers the exercise in which they had to feel three fingers on their right hand in full. Let me say directly: I also suggest starting with simple things. Generally, you can work with any part of the body, but Gurdjieff's approach was

based on the fact that we always use our fingers, so our sensitivity to sensations in them is higher; therefore, it is easier to do an exercise.

You can practice getting aware of the arm on the whole, and when you succeed, you can complicate the task: for instance, by feeling the right arm in full, then switching attention to the left arm and trying to get the same result in there. Finally, the exercise is as follows: start with getting aware of the right arm (five to ten minutes), switch to the left arm (for the same period of time), then to the left leg and to the right one. After that, direct attention at the sensations in the trunk and the head. In the end, try to get aware of you whole body.

The main difficulty faced during this exercise (in addition to “falling asleep”) is not to mistake concentration for awareness. The mind used to concentration can start focusing on the sensations in the extremity and creating pressure in the field of observation. It entails heaviness and discomfort in that body part. Concentration results from the strong desire to achieve the purpose. This method is wrong and will never bring you to the purpose sought because concentration is narrowing of attention, which is the opposite of awareness.

The adequate approach is to try to *open up* to all the sensations in the body part being observed, right here and now. We can put it another way: you should open your attention to the part which we are going to get deeply aware of and let the appearing sensations fill all your attention. Here is one more explanation: when you get sensations in the body part being observed, we must enter and plunge into them so that they can be grasped and manifested in full.

Some of the things related to feeling and sensing cannot be properly described with the words. Description of the same internal action with a different wording can trigger understanding of the process for different people. Sometimes one sentence describing something you have read numerous books about in a different manner is a key to enlightenment and breakthrough in understanding the issue.

25.

It is common knowledge that water dripping day by day wears the hardest rock away. However, if you start watching it, you will not see it at once. We will most probably see the drops smashing against the rock one by one. The short-term observation can create the opposite opinion that water is weaker than rock. However, if water keeps dripping, it will wear the rock away in the end. The same thing happens when we expend our efforts in awareness. In the beginning, we lack free energy of attention; we often get distracted, fall asleep and forget about our purpose. We have difficulty holding attention in the decoupling, in the openness to sensations, and it might seem for sure that this work cannot be done. Yet, it will be a delusive impression casting doubt in our mind and making us think that all our efforts break into pieces just like water drops when they hit the rock of the unconsciousness. It might seem for a long time that nothing is happening, but the processes flow subtly, concealed from our eyes with stronger emotional and mental reactions. At the same time, there is always time when results of the expended efforts get so obvious that they simply cannot be ignored. When it comes to getting aware of the physical body, sensitivity gets improved at first; eventually, there is total and permanent presence of our attention in our body. It happens suddenly, similar to the lights turned on in the dark room with all the contents thereof getting visible. The things that used to be a vague shape or unclear silhouette are now open for perception. Since then, we are always aware of our body, with no additional efforts: this is a new level of the being. Once you reach such state, you cannot lose it. It can only get deeper and deeper while your awareness keeps growing.

26.

There is the following essential aspect in the practice of awareness: the quantity of the energy that can be used to witness. The quantity of our free energy defines the quantity we can consciously consume.

The energy we get from food, breathing and impressions is partly consumed by the automatic functions of the body (heartbeat, digestion etc.) while the other part can be used at our discretion. We use it in a carefree manner like kids. It drains away through the unconscious bodily tension, bursts of negative and positive emotions, and generation of desires and subsequent related concerns. In other words, each body's activity takes energy. Moreover, if we are not worried or hassled, we are happy to channel all the free energy we possess to get pleasures.

Any pleasure takes energy to be spent, but this process is not as unambiguously negative as it is often described by the supporters of austerity. Alcohol, dancing till you drop, sex, coupling with movie events, visiting friends, playing football or going to a restaurant... All these actions give us impressions, although

not always the ones we need, and take away our energy. We need fresh impressions the same way as fresh bread, but the mind affected by the power of its habits turns our pursuit of pleasure into a mechanical and useless action. As a result, the impressions we get turn stale and fail to satisfy us. In the end, the things that used to be pleasant turn into something equal to grief, but the mind keeps striving for repetition and makes us walk along the well-trodden paths.

This way, all the energy that has not been used to worry and resolve survival-related issues is drained down the channel of the habitual pleasure.

Development of awareness takes efforts to redirect the flow of energy. That is why when you wish to expand the field of your awareness and include the body, emotions and the mind in there, it should be done in the morning, right after you wake up, when the energy is still fresh and abundant.

When you decide to act this way, on getting out of bed, you should consider everything you do outside and the psychoemotional reactions accompanying your actions. You might be brushing your teeth or having breakfast: all these routine actions will be followed by the flow of thoughts and the feeling 'I like it', 'I don't like it' or 'I don't care'. Your task is not to "fall asleep", i.e. not to be coupled with your thoughts and sensations and forget about observation. It is a very hard thing to do unless you already have the skill of passive practices. Even if you have this skill, it is quite challenging to stay aware when you leave home. You might get distracted by any external irritant and "sail" into the dreams by losing the awareness.

This way or another, as soon as the energy starts to run out, you will get distracted and coupled. In the end, you will spend the rest of the day as usual, being absent from your actions and decisions. The energy will flow along the habitual channels of the unconscious suffering and search for pleasure. It can all be started over from tomorrow.

27.

Such "falls" are inevitable in the awareness, so do not be sick at heart. On the other hand, where there are none at the very beginning of this work, you are probably busy thinking rather than watching.

Saving energy has two sides. The first one is related to control, i.e. forced refusal from pursue of some desires in order to save energy for witnessing. The pro of this approach is that the mind knows it since control is its power. It will be happy to exercise control and suppress any desires, including the most innocent ones. In this case, cons naturally step from pros. Suppression of desires creates tension in all the bodies; moreover, the desires will win sooner or later, and you will be submerged into the gulf of unconsciousness, which will be very deep.

The other way to save energy is to refuse from the things you do mechanically, habitually or because these actions are expected by the people around. For instance, one of the hardest aspects experienced at the beginning of the awareness practice is to keep self-observation while talking to someone. As a rule, as soon as the conversation starts, the attention is fully absorbed by the companion's words and the fact that you must respond. Even if you observe yourself a little, you will make sure that communication takes away lots of your energy and time. Moreover, the considerable part of the time spent by you to talk is just wasted for unconscious chat. You can refuse from such communication quite painlessly for yourself and observe how much the mind likes talking rot.

I think everyone can try and find the actions that have turned into mechanical life habits and are of no use for the mind or heart. You can easily refuse from them. Furthermore, this refusal is temporary, for the period necessary to strengthen the witnessing skill. As soon as awareness gets stable, you can turn back to everything you have refused from. Of course, if you wish to for some unexplainable reasons.

28.

The one watching properly starts to see. He watches his body and sees its tension and reasons for it. When he considers the emotions, he understands their roots, and realizes how the mind works and how the ideas programming the mind create grounds for new desires.

I heard the spiritual trainer claim that the expression 'look inside yourself' was erroneous and senseless. He claimed that he had tried that, but had seen and found nothing but darkness. He suggested that everyone should try and make sure by closing their eyes and trying to look inside themselves. Naturally, he then offered the genuine methodology for quick enlightenment and spiritual cleansing.

His mistake was that he tried to look inside himself with his eyes. Thus, he saw only those things that could be seen with his eyelids closed. By the way, it is a common mistake made by the novice Seekers.

The efforts made to observe, witness and self-recollect develop the Seeker's internal or *spiritual* vision. It results from awareness: direct perception of everything within the field of attention at this very moment by the consciousness. When it is developed, it creates the basis for seeing, the state in which man can perceive the Divine Will clearly and, with account of his vision, follow it.

The Seeker looking at the visible world and everything it contains fearlessly with his eyes perceives the things that cannot be seen with his spiritual vision. Even if the Seeker closes his eyes, his spiritual vision will remain sharp and looking into the depth of things.

29.

Spiritual vision can be easily imitated by the mind. The strong desire keeps looking for the compensation for itself, and if you wish to see the world differently, the mind will use the imagination to fill the created perception gap easily. These do not have to be hallucinations: the mind will merely start producing different images and pictures as soon as you "look" inside or outside with your eyes closed. Many Seekers and psychics live in such self-deception. In fact, they live in the world they have imagined. This is one of the numerous traps on the Path. The only way to avoid the trap is to hold on to the simple, basic things, to continue witnessing and to resist the temptation to look different ways with your eyes closed. The accumulated witnessing experience will enable telling the difference between the phenomenon of the real spiritual vision and projections of the mind.

The mind is artful, and the desires are strong. That is why many of the techniques are not described in detail so that the Seeker knowing the way it is supposed to be will not deceive himself. That is why many aspects of the Truth are concealed until the follower is ready to perceive them adequately.

Now, while writing these lines, I am fully aware of the fact that such detailed description of some aspects may be harmful due to the above properties of the human mind. Yet, I continue this work hoping that there are the people who will be able to make use of what they have read, to understand and apply the knowledge properly, and to avoid the traps of the mind.

30.

Jesus said it is no use looking for the Kingdom of God outside, in the outer world, because it is inside man. Following these words, the Seeker tries to go inside himself, into the core of his being, but he faces challenges.

Getting aware of your body is not a simple thing; awareness of your emotions is harder, and it is very difficult to be aware of movements of the mind. I have met lots of people unable to understand which emotion they felt at a certain moment. The well-established habit of suppressing and ignoring your emotions results in the people not knowing themselves: when they are furious, they keep assuring the people around that they feel love. Or they claim to feel nothing but peace and indifference while clenching their teeth.

The habit of denying your feelings for the sake of an ideal image of yourself is very common. Denial of your internal reality is expressed as *no desire to see* your own negative emotions and, as a result, a sort of blindness with regard to them. Here the Seeker faces the inability to be aware of and witness anything related to his emotions.

In order to get out of the approaching dead-end, you must understand that you are the only one forbidding yourself to get aware of your negative emotions. When you were a child, you accepted that ban as a guide for action under your parents' and teachers' pressure. Since then, it has been a part of your self-control system maintaining the illusion that your ego is a master of your internal situation. This is not true, so your condition turns into chaos from time to time when you lose control.

The ban is unnatural, but you have created it yourself, so you are the one to lift it. It is the ban on expression of emotions and their continuous control which have resulted in the chaos inside. On the contrary, if you get aware of your emotions, you can resolve the existing issues without creation of the new ones.

The ban alongside with the control has turned into a part of your conditionalism, of your being. You need efforts to change the state of matters. You will have to *accept* yourself as you are and *let* yourself be what you are, without comparison with the perfect behavior, with the rules carved in your mind. It does not happen in an instance, and I have already written about it. The main thing is to let your emotions show themselves and stop being afraid of such manifestations.

In fact, your emotional energy looks forward to showing itself. If you are ready to accept manifestations of your emotions, they will not be slow in coming. The other thing is that it will only be a tip of the iceberg

as too many of them have been suppressed all these years. Nevertheless, it gives food for observation and allows starting work with the suppressed emotions that color the psychoemotional background all the time. The fury you have seen must be expressed with special techniques; you can also spot its cause and the desire it is based on. A fear can be observed by letting its hidden sources and disguised manifestations get into the light of consciousness.

Patient observation allows learning how to see the most delicate movements of any emotion. However, you should start with rough and perceivable emotional conditions. Man often fails to notice and see his main most recurrent emotion. A troubled man cannot see his anxiety, and the scared one cannot see his fear. When they start witnessing in such condition, they see anything but the key problem. Here is the trick of coupling: the stronger man couples with something, the harder it is to see and get aware of that.

In such cases, an outer witness can be of help, to tell the person what his emotional issue is. As they say, standers-by see more than gamesters. The best witness is the Master, but, judging by my experience, few Seekers can find him. A mirror function can be discharged by any person practicing awareness. The main requirement to be met is to easily distinguish what he sees from the projections of his own mind. That is why witnessing by those who do not observe themselves can be false because it often shows its projections rather than what really is inside.

An outer witness may be of great help for the Seeker. He shows the direction to look in, and if the Seeker has proper trust and determination, he starts getting aware of what he has been said, but could not see. Then comes the ability to change the situation.

31.

After the Seeker learns how to recognize his current emotions, to observe and get aware of them, he will face the **suppression** challenge. In other words, the Seeker will find himself in the situation where he will see his emotion, for instance, fury, but will be unable to find its cause. The harder he will try to get aware of the cause, the more he will bump up against the invisible internal wall. When it happens, it can mean two things: the first one is that fury is a manifestation of the suppressed desire forbidden to display itself, the way it is supposed to be. The second one is that the suppressed energy of fury is bubbling over as it cannot be kept under control anymore, and there is no more space inside where it can be stuffed. All the bodies are too tense, and the excessive energy is thrown off at the earliest; for instance, this results in outbursts of fury over little things. If he does not know that, the Seeker might see an emotion appear, but cannot trace it back to the source.

The expression is the opposite of the suppression, so the proper active techniques must be used to get rid of the tension appearing against the background of regular control of the emotions. You can just try crying out your sadness. However, I have met many people bursting into tears for any reason, but their condition did not change at all; on the contrary, they could not help crying. Fury, anxiety and fear can be similar. The conclusion from the above is simple: unconscious expression of the suppressed emotions might shape an unhealthy emotional stereotype where the feelings go in circles like a horse in the circus, making man feel sad or furious again and again.

In other words, the emotion possesses and guides you in this case, you turn into sadness and its unconscious conductor yourself. If you practice expression of your emotions actively, you are the master, and there is a gap between you and the feeling, so you do not couple in full. At this moment, you turn into a conscious conductor of the emotional energy and break free of it. This approach helps get rid of the stereotype rather than create one.

The expression practices release tension from all the human inferior bodies provided that they are done properly. The internal space is made free, which helps achieve a break-through in self-awareness and gives a chance to **get in**.

The main difficulty faced by those trying to do expression practices is the inability to cross the forbidden line. The mind is on the alert and condemns all the man's actions going beyond the current conditionalism. This self-condemnation blocks the free flow of energy. You keep trying hard, but cannot make your fury flow freely and get rid of the heaviness the unexpressed fury brings. The only way to overcome this resistance is determination and sincere desire to succeed in expression. It sometimes takes a week of daily sessions, sometimes even a month. At any rate, I have never met people who would not have managed to overcome this resistance in a month. As usual, it takes patience and dedication.

After the expression of the suppressed emotions gets available, the following question naturally arises: how to stop pushing them deep inside and to learn to express them directly when they appear?

In order to stop suppressing, you need to learn how to see the appearing emotion and desire as soon as it starts to appear. It takes little: you must be *present* at what is happening, i.e. be aware. In other words, awareness is the main key to getting rid of the habit to suppress all the movements in your emotional and mind bodies. Transformation and decoupling turn into another dream beyond your grasp unless you get rid of this habit.

The easiest way to learn to see how your emotions are suppressed is to start with your physical body. If you have already learned to observe its state, you will have no difficulty capturing the moments when you suppress expression of your energies. Any emotion tries to be expressed through your body: fury with shouting and fighting, sadness with lament and tears, fear and anxiety with shrinking into yourself. Emotions cannot be controlled unless your body is engaged, the same way as information cannot be transferred without a suitable carrier: paper in the printed form, USB and hard drives in the digital form etc. Your body is a carrier of emotions to some extent. That is why when you are observing your body, you can see how it responds the moment you control your desires and feelings. For instance, if you are aware of your breathing, sooner or later you will notice that it sometimes gets shallower, less deep than usual. It happens because an emotion needs to be deprived of energy and weakened to be held back. This is done with superficial breathing: limited intake of oxygen or, if you wish, prana helps you retain control. When you start getting aware of a change in the depth of your breathing, you will see the emotions being suppressed at that moment. After you see that, you will be able to change your reaction.

There are (quite many) people whose breathing changes in the range from the superficial to almost none. It demonstrates that they keep controlling themselves and their feelings. As the endless tension and abnormal breathing are never of use, such people fall ill sooner or later, and a trivial neurotic disorder is by far not the worst thing that might happen to them.

Since emotions try to express themselves through the body, this expression will mostly be controlled with muscles. They will be contracting involuntarily to prevent the emotional energy from showing itself. That is why those who are well aware of their body can trace occurrence of such involuntary muscle tension and see what emotion has been suppressed. If you manage to see such tension at once, after it has started to appear, you can relax your muscles consciously and disrupt this process.

The fear is suppressed into the lower part of your belly and partly legs, the anxiety goes to the upper part of your belly, sadness remains in the chest, and fury fills your shoulders, arms, neck and jaw muscles. It is sketchy description of the control zones, but still a proper one. I think it is not necessary to describe the intricacies related to the muscle control over each emotion. If you wish, you can find them on your own.

The power and use of awareness is that it enables you to perceive yourself by directly studying the processes in all the layers of a human being rather based on other people's words. Man cannot remain unchanged if he sees the mechanical nature of his internal reactions at least once, the same way as a direct sun ray changes the taste of the beer poured into the glass forever. I have spoken to some people who said: I got aware of my fury and saw the suppressed fear and the reason for suppressing it... The words they say are right and beautiful, without a hitch, but it gets obvious some time later that their being has not changed at all: their unconscious fury keeps flowing, and the fear still limits the choice of possible actions. So it gets clear that all the "revelations" took place in their mind only, fed by their imagination rather than seeing. Sometimes people lie to themselves so artfully that no references to inconsistencies in their being and their statements are of help: they always find a way to justify themselves.

In fact, one of the main results of awareness is changes in the man's being. Unprejudiced observation opens up the cover of illusions about yourself by baring the reality and all the unsolved inner problems.

The one who wants to get in must be ready for unpleasant revelations. The illusions created by the mind are strong, and it is painful to get rid of them. Ego does its best to hide all the existing controversies and sugar-coat itself so discovery of another truth about its state makes it suffer and ruins the foundation on which it tries to stand. That is why the people tortured by their unconscious state striving for peace and quiet rather than bliss cannot even imagine how useful conscious suffering is.

The desire to get rid of pain turns man into a slave: he becomes an eternal hostage of this fear and gets eternally hooked by all the types of defenses and painkillers. For this reason, the one trying to avoid pain cannot get aware because this desire itself makes him flee into unconsciousness and dreams. He does not want to wake up, he wants to sleep deeper.

Approximately the same things happens to those who are suffering from the feeling of inferiority and doing their best to conceal and adorn this inferiority. This inferiority, which is quite fictitious, results from the infusion made by kind people in the childhood, but the attempts to compensate for it themselves make it real. So, when man has been sugar-coating himself and compensating with great difficulty, it is very hard to oppose the life's work and start getting rid of illusions. It does not matter that these illusions are negative in his case (belief in his inferiority and deformity); man is still afraid of his reality and does not dare open it up for himself.

However, it does not mean for sure that people suffering from such problems are unable to reach the high levels of awareness. However, the initial period of work with their attention can be a bit longer. Of course, the precondition for the subsequent success must be identification and acceptance of the existing problem. That is why I suggest that you should look at yourself sincerely now and try to understand:

1. How much you are afraid of pain (physical and emotional one etc.).
2. How much you want to prove to the world that you are smart, brave and charming, i.e. that you are not deformed.

You should work with your fear by means of a passive technique of observation of fear and concurrent development of patience and will. In the beginning, the feeling of your worthlessness and inferiority needs a sort of compensation, i.e. elements of self-fulfillment in external work, sports and hobbies. When the man's state gets relatively balanced, he can start exerting awareness efforts rather than just dreaming about it. Unfortunately, the experience shows that any external self-fulfillment and success are necessary when there is a strong feeling of inferiority and unworthiness. It makes man confident of himself, which is important in self-development. Those trying to get aware of themselves without it are trapped by continuously comparing themselves with the enlightened, the saint and their companions in the Seeking, if any. Such comparison results in irritation, disappointment and self-pity; moreover, the self-affirmation need will entail lies to yourself and surrounding people as well as fits of ostentatious and inappropriate conduct.

34.

Thus, if you are capable of feeling and being aware of your body well, you will have no difficulty identifying the moments when you start suppressing your emotions and desires. By staying alert, you will find out soon which of your muscles participate in control over fury or anxiety, sadness and fear. Emotion expression practices will help you get rid of the burden of these energies. The next logical step following the work you have done will be to get rid of suppression itself.

You must know that various symptoms of the vegetative-vascular dystonia result from tension in the nervous system caused by the suppression. Such results include any dyskinesia, spasm (of blood vessels, ducts, bowels etc.) as well as versatile symptoms typical of a neurotic disorder. The above disorders will be disappearing gradually while you are getting rid of the suppression mechanisms rooted inside.

Suppression is an exclusive right of the mind, and the behavior programs set inside spring into action automatically every time a desire or emotion pushing man to the forbidden expression or action arises. These programs block expression of the emotion or action corresponding to the desire and launch the wave-like reaction, from top to bottom, starting in the mind and ending in the physical body. Desires are suppressed into the unconscious part of the mind while emotions go to the unconscious part of the emotional body; control is physically expressed as muscle tension and unbalance in the autonomic nervous system. The latter acts as a conductor between the physical and emotional bodies.

Suppression is a bastion of unconsciousness, so the one who wants to achieve the highest degree of awareness cannot evade work with the suppressed. There have always been social behavior rules, but the people's being has shifted in the direction of the mind considerably for the last century. It has been facilitated by the need for universal education and overall progress of the humanity in science and technology. There is much less physical labor and much more mental one. In addition to loads of information from mass media, man is regularly implanted ideas by all sorts of advertising. There are also more restrictions in human behavior, which are expanding concurrently with amplification of complexity of social structures and lifestyle. The main behavior rules used to be established by the family raising man

based on their religion, morality and customs, but now they are also supplemented by the restrictions and rules of the company where he works, road traffic rules etc. That is why now suppression is an integral part of the being, and we will have to work with that part, whether we like it or not.

The irony of the situation is that the morality and rules are created for the unconscious people in order to set some boundaries for their animal instincts. However, following the rules often deepens unconsciousness because of the accompanying suppression. In his turn, a conscious person will not steal because he has no desire pushing him to theft rather than because it is forbidden by the law and is punished harshly. This is the only difference, but it is fundamental because it is the difference in the levels of being.

35.

This way, each Seeker observing his body and emotions eventually realizes the need for getting aware of his mind, its content and rules under which it operates. The fuel of the mind is ideas, and the products of the mind are desires.

One must understand that desires are closely linked with the man's needs. "Desire is a need gone mad," Osho said, and he was absolutely right. An example is that a feeling of hunger is the need to be satisfied. Drinking sweet tea with a pickle is a desire of pleasure from the contrast of tastes. The need to satisfy the sexual appetite is expressed as certain desires, and the stronger they are suppressed, the more sophisticated and perverted they will be. The self-fulfillment need may result in the desire to create, to get enlightened, to go up the career ladder or in the feeling that you would love to start a family. The specifics of a desire will always depend on a basic set of ideas processed by the mind. It means that a basis for the desire will be the need. The desire will be shaped based on the conditionalism, according to its principles. That is why different people can have opposite desires out of the same need. For instance, the need to feel safe may bring one man to the desire to be among other people (who can help and protect if you are in trouble) and the other man to the desire to stay away from them (since they are unpredictable, dangerous and do not control themselves).

You must find your suppressed desires in order to see them. They are not within the field of our attention all the time and are noticed from time to time, only under the circumstances when a desire can suddenly be satisfied. Not all the desires are suppressed because of the moral bans and conditionalism; some of them cannot be satisfied at present, so they are pushed back into the unconscious. You cannot see all of them at once as there are many, and they have been suppressed during different life periods. As a rule, this work is similar to peeling an onion layer by layer: as soon as you get aware of and process the desires and emotions related to one "layer" of the unconscious, you can get deeper to open up the new "layer" with emotions and desires suppressed earlier. The work with the unconscious is actually similar to peeling an onion: when all the layers are off, there is nothing left in your hands.

36.

Some modern "spiritual" teachers suggest their methods for cooperation with the unconscious by finding the great strength influencing human life in it. It is difficult to dispute that because the energy of the suppressed desires, fear etc. is actually very strong and quite evidently affects man's behavior and state. So such teachers suggest that you should give yourself the affirmations which will be treated as a guidelines for action by the subconsciousness, and the man's spiritual growth will get quick and easy at once. The others give the unconscious some magic power capable of having a direct impact on human life: they suggest setting it up in the proper manner by means of visualization and other methods and changing your entire "reality" this way. They are forms of self-hypnosis helping make human sleep more comfortable and creating an illusion of power over the things we cannot manage. The desire to cooperate with the unconscious arises out of the inability to do anything about it, which results from the fact that man has not mastered the skills of witnessing. The genuine spiritual work is to introduce the light of consciousness into the dark of the unconsciousness. Then the unconscious will be shrinking and the conscious will be expanding as long as the awareness grows. In the end, there will be nothing unconscious left in man.

I cannot help mentioning the masters giving their followers different visualization methods. Something like that: "Imagine that your body is getting filled with white and pure energy. It is overflowing you, and your body is starting to grow" and so on. Such active exercises themselves can be of use to develop some functions of your mental body. However, they are controlled dreams by their nature. Of course, man feels refreshed like after a good sleep on doing such exercise. He might even feel sort of inspiration. Nevertheless,

it has nothing to do with awareness because a dream is a dream, and it does not matter in terms of consciousness whether it is inspiring or scary.

37.

I do not think that we can avoid the issue of sexual attraction when it comes to the suppressed desires. It turns into a stumbling rock for many Seekers: some of them follow the ancient advice and their fear of communication with the opposite sex and suppress their desire while others keep up with the latest tendencies of sexual revolution and get into the sects where excessive sexual liberation is the basic practice. Given the fact that all the people are concerned about the sex issue, the Seekers who have started to work with themselves have double concerns in most cases.

I have already written that ancient scriptures should be treated with caution, with account of their creator and target audience. Such works were often written by the monks who had to justify their vows of sexual abstinence, so of course they all claim sex is harmful. I can understand this statement: in fact, sex and romantic relations take away lots of energy, which can be used for spiritual practices. However, hundreds of years of sexual suppression, especially in our country in the “platonic” Soviet times, have shifted sex into the mind almost absolutely. There is an opinion that most modern people have never plunged into the depth of the explosion and purification of all the energies caused by the real orgasm.

The evident fact is if there is muscle overtension in the body, the energy will not be able to flow freely. The overtension associated with suppressions of any kind deprives the body of delicate sensitivity while the bans stuck in the mind add the denial of sex and yourself into the sex. Here comes the second extremity: if I have sex (which is allegedly banned), I am a sinner. Therefore, if I am bad, I must go all the way, i.e. become debauched. It is similar to a man who has not been drinking alcohol for a long time: after he throws back a shot, he says to himself, “You see, I have drunk and breached the vow of abstinence, so it doesn’t matter anymore.” In the end, he gets rip-roaring drunk.

The Seeker will have to work with the sexual suppression at the level of all three bodies. As for the physical body, it takes the practice of awareness during the foreplay and during the intercourse itself. In the beginning, the desire and arousal will throw the Seeker back into the unconsciousness, but the more he gets aware of his body in ordinary situations, the faster he will manage to keep witnessing in sex. Such witnessing will enable him to find the body tensions connected with the suppressed sexual energy and to change the movement stereotype shaped against the background of these suppressions. In other words, he will be able to get more natural and spontaneous, in fact, more alive, in sex.

When it comes to emotions, it is necessary to handle the fear surrounding the entire sex issue. Women are afraid of men’s aggression while men are afraid of women’s power; both patterns are established in the childhood and leave an imprint on their entire life. The attitude to sex as to something unnatural, animal and dirty is unconsciously transferred from one generation to the next one and turns into a part of the conditionalism. Sex is appealing and terrifying at the same time. It results in the suppressed desire and its companions, fury and sadness. The offensive language usually used by people to express their fury in any situation has a sexual connotation for a good reason. That is why the Seeker will have to consider the fury and sadness associated with the expressions of the suppressed sexual desire.

Then goes the mind. To start with, one must find the denial of and ban on sex inside. After that, it is necessary to work with numerous suppressed desires accumulated since the puberty. If man manages to stop condemning them, it will be easier to express them, so it will be possible to change the internal situation. Observation changes everything, and the sexual desire is no exception. The rules for handling it are the same as the ones for the other desires: something gets actualized, something disappears itself. Of course, it is a summary of the work, which is concurrently done at all three levels in most cases. It is more natural and right. In any case, as long as man continues denying and suppressing his sexuality, he remains psychologically immature and aggressive. It is an accomplished fact.

38.

Now let’s return to desires. They can be traced by means of the appearing fury, sorrow or fear. However, it can be quite difficult if a desire has been suppressed deeply. When such a desire is activated and conflicts the established conditionalism and related bans, tension appears, and there may be vague anxiety disguising the fear of breaking the ban. The tension will result from control, repression of the desire. In addition to the anxiety and ban itself, it will hinder awareness of the desire.

That is why you have to use indirect ways to identify hidden desires in the beginning. For instance, dreams. Any dream is compensation for one or several unfulfilled desires, so if you analyze your dreams, you can see the desires behind them. After that, you must realize whether your desire can actually be fulfilled, and what prevents fulfillment of this desire inside or outside you. Then everything gets simple: you either fulfill your desire or get fully aware of its unreality and abandon it by accepting the situation as it is.

There is another simple technique used to understand your desires better. It has two steps: first, imagine that you have a million dollars you may (have to) spend. After you have imagined that, write down everything that comes to your mind and do not let your mind interfere with its condemnation or stupid better judgment. Let yourself buy what you want. Do not avoid little things as minor desires are the same important. Do not increase the amount as much as you want, stay within the given one. Do it fast and do not take time to contemplate. The first things coming to your mind are your unfulfilled desires. The things coming to your mind in several hours are the game of your mind that works out the problem in the most beneficial manner.

The second step must be done right after the first one, at once. For this purpose, imagine that you are a powerful magician. After that, imagine how you would use the power you had. You must also act fast so that you could see *the real* desires rather than the mind and its games. They should also be recorded on paper for subsequent work.

Then analyze what you have written down. The desires of the first step are related to the material while the second step can include both materialistic and idealistic desires (for instance, flying in the sky like a bird). Both desires themselves and the needs they express should be understood and verbalized. The expressed needs can be versatile: new impressions, comfort, safety, freedom, full stomach etc. Then they can be treated with the standard procedures: some are actualized, some are abandoned, with continuous awareness...

39.

In order to break down the automatic suppression mechanism, you need a stable level of presence in yourself, i.e. the level of awareness. This work cannot be done until you continuously witness what is happening inside and outside you. There is only one way to stop the mechanism for suppression of your emotions: start expressing them. It is common knowledge that human behavior can be adequate or inadequate. In the usual sense, adequacy conforms to self-control while inadequacy is loss of such control. In terms of awareness, an aware person is adequate to the situation while an unconscious one will be inadequate. That is why expression of emotions requires awareness because the fear of losing self-control is a part of the suppression system. So, awareness is necessary to let yourself express, for instance, fury without coupling with this fear. Loss of self-control generally results in shouting, outburst of emotions and different ridiculous statements. After that, man feels awkward and realizes he has done a stupid thing. This is what makes expression of fury inadequate: man expresses not only the instant fury, but also all the fury accumulated lately, so the situation seems wild. That is how an unconscious person behaves.

The aware one will express dissatisfaction so that another person will not be offended and will understand his feelings. The one who is aware and does not couple with the emotion remains the master of the situation. Such expression ability is developed gradually as long as the Seeker *is learning* how to start speaking about his feelings directly instead of keeping silence in anger. It takes total sincerity, but I have already written about it in the previous book.

Thus, expression *puts a stop to* the suppression mechanism. However, there are such emotions as fear that can be expressed only with immediate escape. In this case, suppression must be replaced with observation of fear or anxiety. The observation skill creates a gap between you and the emotion and prevents coupling so you can keep the fear within the field of your attention and act as if it was not there. As the energy of fear is not suppressed, it will fade away, and the fear will disappear; this is the beauty of conscious work with emotions in comparison with the blind suppression. When fear disappears, you are *free from it*; it does not settle down in your unconsciousness and will not remind of itself with panic attacks.

The gap between your Self, consciousness and inferior bodies will keep growing as long as your awareness is getting increased. This is a progressive process, the same way as overcoming the automatic habit of suppression: the work with it takes time and is gradual, starting from partial replacement of suppression with expression and observation and increasing the scope of replacement. In the end, awareness of your desires and conditionalism will result in nothing to suppress.

40.

When it comes to the expression practices, they sometimes require the Seeker to fully plunge into the energies he works with at the level of the body and emotions. In this case, he can express them in full and reach the depth where the sources of these energies are hidden. Observation and decoupling may also bring this outcome, but they will take longer.

That is why the Seeker must develop the skill of *conscious coupling* to do some techniques in a more accurate manner. It is not very hard for those who can manage their attention well and only sometimes poses challenges for those who regularly make significant decoupling efforts.

The procedure itself is quite easy: during the expression practice, the Seeker ceases to divide his attention and fully directs it at the energy he is working with now. For instance, fury. He must let his attention be absorbed by the fury and his consciousness disappear in there. It means the attention must turn into the channel with nothing but energy of the fury. In other words, it must *become the fury*. When all the energy has been expressed, the Seeker will have no difficulty returning into his ordinary state of awareness. Such practice can be applied in working with the sexual energy and dissolving in the prayer.

There are some paths using the decoupling methods only. There are numerous paths using both methods: witnessing and conscious coupling when necessary.

In any case, alternation of conscious coupling and decoupling trains and improves the ability to manage the attention. Moreover, such alternation deepens both the awareness and conscious loss of yourself during the energy practices.

41.

The awareness also grows gradually, but it occurs in a sort of “leaps” – it can seem for a long time that nothing is happening, and then you unexpectedly get aware of the fact that the field of your attention has expanded considerably. Its expansion is hard to notice and similar to a quantum jump: you suddenly realize that you see much more and deeper. This ability to see does not depend on your state or outer conditions; it is just there. It is a part of your changed being, it is independent and self-sufficient.

42.

At the beginning of the 1990s, I met the man who turned into my teacher although he did not intend to. His last name was Ogorodnik, and he taught in the alternative medicine school which I attended. I was young, inexperienced and had no idea of meditation. I am endlessly grateful to that man who gave me the first technique. However, it was not the main thing. The main thing he gave to me was broadening my horizon. He told me the names of the people I had never heard of and recommended to read their books. He *raised the bar*, i.e. set the objectives and goals which I worked with for several years; it took much longer to get aware of everything he had told me. Nevertheless, owing to the words of his, I found my Path, and the role of those words and knowledge is priceless although the other man turned into my Master in the end. I hope that this book will help some of the readers to raise their bar a bit higher and to expand their horizon. If it happens, I will pay back to the people who have shared their experience and knowledge with me.

43.

I have already written in another book that the growth of awareness stops at some moment unless there are special circumstances placing the observer into the new, unknown situation. They can be additionally created by the Master or following God’s Will. They happen to us naturally all the time. Anything that happens to us in life is the material to work with yourself. Whether it is good or bad, anything that touches, hooks or sends you over the edge is favorable conditions for awareness.

An ordinary man’s state is to wish yourself good, i.e. peaceful, smooth and monotonous state of life where you do not have to make any special efforts to maintain it and satisfy your needs. This desire of peace is based on the fact that man almost always has to do the things he does not actually wish to. This desire, a very human one, is deadly for the Seeker, and it appears only in the moment of weakness or as the end of his personal Seeker’s path. Quiet and peaceful life does not encourage growth because there is no challenge and, accordingly, no need to overcome obstacles.

You must understand that hardships on your Path are the necessary and mandatory part of growth. Whether you like it or not, man gets mature only when he overcomes himself and the circumstances.

So the rule of the genuine Seeker must be as follows: no matter what is happening to you, no matter how much pain you are in or how difficult it is, stay aware! Do not stop witnessing for an instant, even when you want to fall down unconscious. This world has nothing a witness cannot bear. Do not let your fear and self-pity weaken your energy of attention. No matter what happens, be present in there: this is the key to growth. The extreme situations are the very thing unlocking what is hidden and unconscious inside. The fears hidden in ordinary situations show up, and the desires you have not seen are activated. This is a wonderful moment for awareness, this is an opportunity of breaking through to such depth of your being you have never suspected you have. Getting aware of yourself during stress is a form of super-effort, and the situation itself encourages you to discover yourself. Never try to avoid the existing hardship as it is harmful in any sense: pretending that it does not exist will not help resolve the issue. Go there, accept it and gain new experience. It is priceless because the experience is the only thing we get from our life.

44.

The Master is known to be a mirror for his follower. It means that in addition to the functions the Master usually discharges, there is another one – to show the follower his current state. If the follower is in fury, his fury must be shown; if he is in resistance, he must be assisted in getting aware of that... It is an important and essential part of the Master's work. However, when you are aware, your life becomes your Master. All the situations, all the people with or without their troubles turn into your teachers. They trigger our reactions, actions and thoughts, they are food for our observation. Those who are sustainable in their awareness can make use of anything: a conversation in a line or a walk on their own, all these things tell them about themselves. When they interact with the world, they get a better understanding of themselves. It is similar to sitting on a river bank and watching what it brings. Life is the same: like a river, it brings us the situations that can be a step to the summit of awareness or a ticket to the country of fear and escape from problems. Any situation gives you an opportunity to grow, fall or stagnate. Awareness is the key to turning your life into the search, adventure, something that cannot be described with words.

45.

As soon as man redistributes his attention and directs most of it inside himself, it starts growing inwards. It is logical: it has nowhere to grow outwards. The phenomena of keen hearing and improvement of the visual perception (so called 3D vision, which is often described as a special achievement by the novice Seekers) are of little significance and interest. The moment comes when the Seeker's attention is concurrently open to all the information received by the organs of senses: he perceives everything he sees and hears and is aware of smells, if any, and tactile sensations, for instance, warmth or cold. Concurrent perception of all the signals sent by the organs of senses results from the expansion of attention and growth of awareness. As soon as this state is reached once, it cannot grow any more. I had a friend who practiced the hearing meditation; in the end, he developed the skill of hearing a plane in the sky several minutes before it could be heard or seen by the people around him. That skill could only be used in practice during the war, when expecting air raids and bombing. In ordinary life, it is nothing more than a strange "peculiarity", which you can use once to make an impression on a girl at the first date. Different changes in vision, for instance, seeing human aura and so on, are of the same kind. It might be or not be of practical use for you and other people, but the temptation to boast of the newly-developed skills is so strong that they sometimes cause more spiritual harm and degradation than growth. While I was working over myself, I had a number of such breakthroughs in my perception, but when I look back now, I cannot say that they helped me advance on my Path drastically. That is why you should not flatter yourself with the excessive information coming from the outside. The things happening inside are more important.

In the beginning, your attention will notice only the most visible: suppressed fury or fear, tension that is so large that it cannot go unnoticed. Then, as you progress, large tension will be worked through, and your perception abilities will get finer. You will see more delicate emotions and desires hidden deeper. As long as your awareness and decoupling grow, the ideas being a basis for conditionalism will manifest themselves.

Deprivation of tension and automatic psychoemotional reactions alongside with the continuous witnessing of yourself create the conditions under which man unexpectedly comes inside.

I must say that I personally treated the instructions of the mystics claiming that you must get inside yourself, where the most important things are, as a symbol, a sort of beautiful image or metaphor. I did not realize that it was a *literal* instruction to be followed by directing all the energy of your attention inside yourself, your body. It should not be concentration on, say, chakras; you must be looking inside yourself.

Imagine how surprised I was when the invisible barrier disappeared one day, and I saw the endless spaces there. That vision was so impressive that the beauty of external spaces (sea, mountains etc.) has ceased to be so cool as it used to since then.

That discovery helped me understand the Heart in the meaning used by the mystics of all the times and get aware of the connection with the Creator concealed in each man.

46.

Any efforts bear their fruit sooner or later. Even if such fruit is negative experience, they are of the same value since experience is one of the most important things you can acquire in this world. The one who understands that he has expended his efforts the wrong way will be able to change his approach. The one who has got aware of insufficient efforts may cease to waste energy.

I have not seen a single man who has failed to succeed in changing his being with due determination. If he did want to change, he changed. If man wants to be conscious, it happens some day or other.

Transformation of the being is similar to a quantum leap. An electron absorbs a quantum of energy when going up to a higher orbit. In this case, it does not exist in between these orbits: it disappears from one of them and appears on the other one in an instant. The same happens to the Seeker's consciousness. He must continuously direct his energy at expanding his attention. In this process, the Seeker sometimes manages to be aware of himself and sometimes gets distracted and "falls asleep". It can last quite long until he gets enough energy to be contributed into self-development. Then the leap follows: he suddenly realizes that his "sleeping" periods have shortened, and the level of self-awareness between the instants has got higher. It is the new stage of the being perceived as another level of consciousness. New transitions follow, and the "sleeping" periods eventually disappear.

At the same time, the Seeker develops a feeling of a permanent core inside holding him like an anchor and preventing him from full coupling with the inferior bodies. As long as awareness and transformation of the being grow, the feeling of this center grows stronger. In the end, the Seeker starts to feel the permanent *presence* in all of his actions.

This sensation results from decoupling of the consciousness and its crystallization into the separate center. The farther the Seeker goes, the stronger the presence is. At the same time, the crystallization of consciousness and no chaos inside, decoupling of the consciousness from the mind weaken the ego and make it more fragile.

When the consciousness is fully separated and takes the place designated by the Creator in his being, all the traces of unconsciousness together with the ego disappear in its light. Now the Seeker can cease to develop awareness and enjoy its fruit.

AFTERWORD

I have written this book for myself. For myself trying to master the basics of meditation eighteen years ago. I did lack the detailed, step-by-step guidance describing the key aspects on the path to awareness. Of course, this book does not have all the answers to all the questions the Seeker might have. But it has the keys that will take the Seeker to the answers. Life is a great mystery composed of numerous smaller secrets. The one who has keys is capable of revealing some of them.

Every man has the potential to be developed and unlocked to the full. It is the right everyone has, but few exercise. The situation is like that because many people still love to play with their desires. I hope this book will be of help for those who are already aware of the futility of the rush towards the illusion of happiness after another desired item is acquired.

Everything I have written in this book is true. However, when I set myself the goal of explaining the key aspects of dealing with awareness, I had to narrow the scope of the issues being described in order to make them as clear as possible. That is why it might seem to a reader that personal efforts are the only thing important on the path to decoupling and awareness. That is not quite the case. Efforts are definitely necessary and obligatory for the man developing the power of awareness. However, it would be wrong to omit God's mercy that makes any movement possible. Yet, trust in the mercy and doing nothing are different things. That is why the man who realizes it does his best and concurrently prays to God for help. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you."

I recommend all the readers of this book to exercise awareness and do hope that you will succeed in changing the quality of your being.

