

Text from the Tradition: Living Presence by Kabir Edmund Helminski

(text drawn from pp. 67-71, 8, 21, 163, 74, 153-155)

Awakening Latent Human Faculties by Polishing the Mirror of Awareness

The spiritual process...can be understood as consciously polishing the mirror of awareness. This mirror is like a sensitive screen on which appear thoughts, desires, fears, expectations, and conditioning, and on which the spirit may also purely reflect...In meditation, we learn to focus our attention on the sensitive screen of awareness, rather than becoming absorbed in its contents. Thoughts and feelings are the contents of the mirror, not the mirror itself. To the extent that we are collected and awake, we can see them as images in the mirror. Each human being has the capacity to know many levels of experience...This mirroring capacity is limited by the condition of the mirror. Its reflective capacity is reduced by the quantity and quality of our images, thoughts, and feelings, which accumulate upon the mirror...If we could clear the mirror, the light of Being would be reflected outwardly as light, and light pouring out of our eyes. In polishing the mirror of the heart, the most obvious levels of rust contain our compulsions and negative feeling states-the demands of the ego. We must first recognize, respect, and surrender these negative states. We release them by recognizing them, and each surrender is a little death. Through this process of letting go with each breath, we can become free of the compulsive mind, to experience a new freedom, with a new depth and a new height. If we periodically examine the quality of our thought, our own inner preoccupations, we will keep begin to know ourselves as we are.

The work I hope to describe is a process of awakening a transcending awareness, a presence that can initiate and sustain the activation of our latent human faculties...The human being has not only the faculties of sense, emotion, and intelligence that we already know, but other faculties or senses-volitional, psychic, intuitive, magnetic, and ecological. A purified and energized nervous system with all these faculties functioning harmoniously would lead a person to experience the unity of Being-unity with the Cosmic Life and with the Creative Power. Our ability to notice and become aware of something is yet another capacity we are endowed with. A critical distinction can be made between awareness and consciousness...Consciousness is the highest capacity a human being can experience at will...When a conscious presence has been awakened, giving us the ability to direct a refined attention, we are more able to open to the knowledge of the heart.

The heart perceives the spirit that moves in everything and apprehends the soul of each thing. This is because everything in existence is the manifestation of a single source: the Absolute Divine Unknown. This absolute motion is called spirit, which is experienced as love in its many subtleties...As the heart is refined, as we develop our latent human faculties, we open more and more, to the protective grace of love. Without this action of love in the mind, the individual psyche would remain as something separate and autonomous. Through the creative and attractive power of love, the mind is helped to make contact with more and more of the universe, to feel its participation in the continuing miracle of existence.

It is possible to restructure the brain so that there is more conscious awareness. This has been called polishing the mirror, awakening from sleep, cultivating the witness, and developing the real "I." Through

changing the energy level of the brain, we can activate a different kind of brain function—a finer attention that stands above routine, habitual thought, feeling, and behavior. This presence—this conscious, listening mind—not only opens a window on our experience, it also connects us to the source of will...It is this sensitivity that makes the difference between being normally awake and experiencing life as the gift that it is.

We begin by recollecting ourselves and asking something of this non-dimensional point that is our contact with spirit. We gather the whole of ourselves into a single sincere act, calling upon this slumbering spiritual essence within us in order that it may be activated in response. The individual mind can make contact with the greater Mind dormant within us. With humility, which is the awareness of our dependence on the One, we will be opened to a spiritual inflow. Our own self will become transparent to the light that is meant to shine through and from us. Humility allows the annihilation of what is less real about us and the reflection of what is more real. Through worship, a loving attunement, we better reflect spirit. We can learn to do it more and more at will. A protective grace becomes available to those who share worship. With this grace perception changes. We develop it by opening ourselves to every manifestation of life we encounter. When we gather our faculties, giving them both direction and stillness, as if before the face of Love, we are also preparing ourselves to remember this love spontaneously at other times. If we consistently direct our attention, desire, will, thought, and feeling in the direction of love, the love thus realized becomes a vital power and capacity.

Questions for Reflection:

- Of the many human faculties available, which ones are you most or least aware of? How do you work toward increasing your awareness of your human capacities?
- Recall a moment or time of awakening...what is your sense of what awakening looks and feels like?
- How do you recognize when you have fallen asleep or dormant?