

## **What is Reality (and why should you care)?**

by Bill Harris, Director

I've just begun the second of my three 12-lesson telecourses, this month. On Tuesday night, we'll have our second lesson. This second telecourse is called The Accelerated Change Maximizer, and it's about two closely related subjects: 1) change, what it is, why it happens, how it happens, and how to deal with it, and 2) the general topic of metaphysics, what most people would call the spiritual realm.

Because I've been preparing for the lessons in this course, I've been thinking a lot about these topics, and I'd like to share some of my thoughts with you.

By the way, I do urge you to take the online version of these three telecourses, and you can listen to a free preview lesson at: <http://www.centerpointe.com/life/online/preview>

A few of the fundamental questions I've been thinking about as I've been preparing for The Accelerated Change Maximizer are: What is reality? What's it all about? Why are we here? These are questions many people fail to consider anymore in this age of quantum mechanics, computers, and high-tech gadgets. I guess people either think they know, or they think the questions have become irrelevant.

Personally, I think these are amazing, and even awe-inspiring, questions.

Alan Watts used to say that a philosopher--the kind of person who would consider such questions--is a kind of intellectual yokel who is amazed by things other people take for granted. "What is reality?" the philosopher asks, while the "normal" person says, "Beats me. Who cares? Let's go do something." To the philosopher, this question continues to evoke awe and wonder, but most people brush it aside as irrelevant.

I'm asking this question, though, not to have my head in the clouds or to discover how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, but rather for very practical reasons. If there is an assumed, shared answer to this question, that underlies our way of living and seeing things--even though we may not be able to articulate it--and this answer is steering us into trouble, into suffering, into an inability to thrive in the world, then perhaps re-examining it could be a worthwhile idea. That's what I'd like to do, then, in a series of articles over the next several issues of Mind Chatter. I think you'll find this series to be very intriguing, and very relevant to your life.

Let's start out by taking a look at a description of reality put forth by mystical philosophers. For thousands of years, mystics have said that there is one energy in the universe, that the universe and everything in it is the play, the dance, the vibration, of that one energy. Underneath the seeming multiplicity, they say, everything is made of the same substance. This energy, they say, is everywhere, and "everywhen." This principle is sometimes described as Omnipresence, or God. The Hindus and Buddhists call this principle, Sat-one energy, everywhere, making up everything, always, past, present, and future.

Quantum mechanical physicists, for several decades, have been saying the same thing. They notice that on the sub-atomic level, particles come into being, seemingly out of nothing, and dissolve and disappear back into nothing, that two or more particles collide, and one, two, three, or more particles, of a different kind, appear from the collision, or all the particles cease to exist. There is a "something" that everything comes out of and returns to, and which makes up, or is the background of, everything.

The mystics, however, went one step further. In addition to noting that this one energy is omnipresent, they also said something else that I think is rather startling. They said that this one energy is aware of itself being everything and everywhere and everywhen: that it is conscious, that it has consciousness. The mystics called this second characteristic of reality Chit.

We'll come back to this in a later article, but I want to briefly make the point here that consciousness, in this sense, is not the same as what we would ordinarily think of as "knowing," in a cognitive sense. This is not the same as your senses and your brain knowing or recognizing something, though that's one of the only reference points we have, intellectually, for understanding the term consciousness. Ultimately, you have to experience being it, and I'll talk more later about what I mean by that.

So, we have this one energy, this oneness, this unity, that is in and behind and over and around and through everything, and this energy of unity, this Oneness, is aware of itself being everything. Now, just for a moment, pretend that you are this one energy. If you were everything, there would be nothing outside of you to fear. That would be like fearing your own hand. If everything is you, and you're everything, there's nothing to fear.

There would also be nothing to get, nothing you would lack, because you're everything. There would also be no where to go, since you're already everywhere. So, here you are, everything, always, everywhere, with nothing to want, nothing to fear, no where to go.

If you had this awareness of who you are, you would be...happy, peaceful, blissful. So the third characteristic of reality, according to the mystics, is called Ananda, which means bliss.

So the mystical explanation of reality is called "satchitananda", which means one energy, everywhere, out of which everything is made and everything comes, aware of itself being everything and everywhere and everywhen, and as a result it is blissful, happy, peaceful.

This, according to the mystical view, is who you really are. Your fears, your desires, your idea that you have to get to somewhere, the idea that you lack something, is, in this view, an illusion. You are not a separate ego in a bag of skin, but rather are this oneness.

Sure, you say. How poetic. Pie in the sky. Sounds nice, and I've heard it all before. But if this is true, why am I so unhappy so much of the time? Why do I feel so powerless. Why

does it seem as if I am a separate creature in what looks to be a pretty dangerous world?

I mean, to live I need a constant supply of a very specific combination of gases to breath. I need food on a regular basis, or I die. I need to keep the temperature of my environment within a certain narrow range. And there's ultraviolet rays, and other dangerous electromagnetic forces, and poisons, and dangerous people who want to hurt me, and if I get just a few miles away from the surface of a planet (which needs a certain atmosphere, at a certain temperature, and which needs to be a certain distance from a certain kind of star), I can't survive.

Why, then, if I'm this one energy of everything, do I feel so isolated, so separate- and why am I so unhappy so often?

Well, the mystics have an answer for this question, and you've heard it before, and you may not like it, but here it is: you aren't happy and peaceful and in touch with the fact that you are all and everything, everywhere, eternally peaceful and blissful, because of your mind. Your mind is in the way of your experience of who you really are.

In fact, as we will see, your mind is creating an alternate reality, that is, in a sense, like dust covering a mirror and keeping you from seeing who you really are.

Seeing that the mind gets in the way and obscures your true nature from you, the mystics came up with some methods for perceiving reality directly, without the filter of the mind, and the most effective and most popular of those is meditation. Meditation is designed to still the mind, until eventually you gain enough control that you can look directly at reality, rather than filtering reality through the mind.

Those that master this ability to see reality directly report some rather startling things about it, and as we go along, I'm going to discuss this in much more depth.

Here's something to think about: Let's start with the premise that your mind is creating your reality. I hope by now, if you've been involved with me for any length of time, you understand that. So, assuming that that is the case, as long as you attend to what the mind creates and see it as "reality", you miss anything else that may be there. When the mind wildly jumps around, creating, without your intention, really, a whole universe, inside and out, that universe will grab all your attention, and that's all you'll see. As the mind becomes quieter, however, you begin to see the spaces between what the mind creates, like parting the branches in a thicket to see snatches of the meadow and the sky beyond.

The other thing the mystics said, something that I also find very interesting, is that at the moment of creation, this one energy of all and everything polarized itself into a seeming duality: good and evil, up and down, male and female, here and there, black and white, off and on, yin and yang, and so on. And there is a tension between the two sides of each of these poles, and the mystics say that this tension between polar opposites is what causes the universe to manifest in the first place.

Now notice that I said this duality is a "seeming" duality. The reason why this duality, these opposites, only seem to exist is that each side of the duality depends on the other side for its existence. Here makes no sense without there. Not me makes no sense without me. Good makes no sense without evil. Each of these exist only in relation to the other. They are not, as we usually think of them, mutually exclusive opposites, but rather aspects of the same thing, the same process.

Each of these seemingly opposite poles are, really, totally dependent on each other. They are one thing, not two. In being opposite, they are also inextricably tied to each other, and cannot exist independently. They're like two sides of the same coin. You can't have a one-sided coin, and the two aspects of duality cannot exist separately either, nor can one win out over the other. I'll have a lot more to say about this later, and why it is such an important point on a very practical level.

Something else I find very interesting is that this tension between polar opposites is reflected in the human brain. Your brain is divided into two hemispheres, a left and a right hemisphere, connected by a small piece of tissue called the corpus callosum.

And, it's possible for one side of the brain to be more active, more dominant, than the other at any given time. This situation, dominance of one side of the brain over the other, is called brain lateralization, and the most interesting thing about brain lateralization, to me, is that the more the brain is lateralized, the more unbalanced it is, the more likely we are to perceive things as separate, the more likely we are to see the two sides of the duality as being two separate things, the more we miss the way in which good and evil, here and there, me and not-me, on and off, life and death, and all the other pairs of so-called opposites, are really aspects of the same thing.

On the other hand, the more balanced the brain is, the less the brain is lateralized to one side or the other, the more we naturally see how the two sides of any duality are really one, and the more you perceive how everything is connected. When we see in this way, we get more and more in touch with that satchitananda I described. In other words, when I say the mind gets in the way of seeing and experiencing who you really are, it would be more accurate to say that the lateralized mind, the lateralized brain, gets in the way of seeing who you really are, the one timeless energy of all and everything.

When you do see who you really are, you relax. As I said, when you see reality directly, when you directly perceive who you really are, without the mind getting in the way and imposing the world it creates on top of everything, there's nowhere to go, nothing to get, nothing to fear. as a result, you relax and experience yourself as happiness, love, peace, and bliss.

This is where meditation comes in, because meditation is designed to balance the brain, which allows you to increasingly experience who you are. In another article, I'm going to go into meditation in much more detail, and how it works, what actually happens in the brain when you meditate, and also how Holosync meditation relates to traditional meditation (you knew I'd get to that). But for now, let's just say that meditation, in

balancing the brain, helps to get the mind out of the way, allowing you to experience yourself, and reality, directly, and when this happens, everything flows.

Now some people, when I describe things in this way, have this idea that if you were able to see reality directly in the way I've described, that you would be this blob of Jello with no motivation and no connection to life as we know it. This however, is not at all what happens. When you see who you really are, you still are aware of the world the mind creates, the world of things and events, and you still participate in it. You know, however, all the while, that it's all a game, a play, and nothing, really, can go wrong. Or, rather, that whatever happens, you (and everyone and everything else) is still that one energy of all and everything.

I'll go into this in more detail in another article, but for now I'll just mention that there are two ways of seeing things. In one way, the conventional way, we see the separation of things and the tension between opposites, and buy into its reality. This could be called "The Game of Black and White." The problem with this way of seeing things is that when we play, we add a rule that gives us a lot of trouble: the rule that White Must Win. We think good must win over evil, without realizing that the two depend on each other, and cannot exist independently. We want life to win out over death, again without realizing that they are one thing, not two.

This struggle to make what cannot be, be, creates suffering.

The other way of seeing things involves acknowledging that all the seeming opposites are one system, one organism, and that everything "goes-with" everything else, and that fighting to make one side disappear or lose is futile.

Now this doesn't mean that you don't strive to be good, or to stay alive, but it does mean that you realize that this striving is not to be taken too seriously, and that you don't need to suffer over it. Suffering, as Buddha said, is caused by attachment, and being attached to one side of a duality "winning" is as silly as being attached to throwing a ball in the air and it never coming down. It won't happen.

In fact, I'll tell you that operating in this other way, in which you see things as more of a game, works much better. Since I've adopted it, I'll tell you that I have much more passion for life, not less. I get better results. I feel more alive, not less. I just don't have to suffer over things being different than I would like them to be.

And, ironically, the more you adopt this more conscious posture toward life, the less you are attached to what happens, or how it happens, the more things seem to happen the way you would like them to happen. You would think that the more attached you are, the more you would strive and the more things would go your way, but that isn't how it works. When you adopt the posture I'm advocating, life becomes effortless, and what needs to happen, happens. It's as if the whole universe lined up on your side to help you. And when things turn out differently than you wanted, you just go on, remaining just as happy as if they had gone the way you wanted.

So, you ask, how do you get to this place? Well, there are many ways, and I don't claim my way is the only way, and it may not even be the best way, though it's the best way I have found. I suggest you diligently meditate with Holosync, since doing so creates the changes in the brain that allow you to see how things are connected, and how everything works together. And the second thing I suggest is learning what I'm teaching in these three online courses, my Life Principles Integration Process.

If you do these things, you become conscious of how your mind is creating your reality. At the very least, you become able to direct that creation in the direction you want. Then, if you want to go further, you can, at will, step out of the world created by your mind, and stand aside from it, so to speak, while still participating. As I said, my view is that your participation of it improves. Like getting all the taste without the calories, developing this kind of conscious awareness gives you all the zest for life without the suffering.

Next time we'll investigate these ideas in more detail. Until then...

Be well.

Bill Harris, Director

Excerpt taken from Centerpointe's monthly newsletter, Mind Chatter, January 2004.