

Practice Withdrawal Of Attention

Welcome friends. I am very happy to visit London again and see so many old friends sitting here, and some new friends. They say that there are no new friends, always old friends. We don't meet unless we have been friends sometime in the past. Looks like this creation is like a carnival roundabout, where you go round and round and meet the same people over and over again. And we don't meet old friends. We meet new friends: new friends, old friends, they are all the same.

It's amazing how this life cycle operates, and sometimes you can recognize people, sometimes you cannot. There are some people who are very sharp in recognizing people they haven't met for one hundred years or two hundred years. They met them in past lives, and they come and have a strange feeling: "I know this person, I don't know how, but there is something in this person telling me that I have known this person before."

There are many people who don't believe in reincarnation, but then they have personal experiences of this kind, and some of them can even remember events that happened earlier. And then one begins to believe that there must be something in it.

The idea that we have an immortal soul—which is an idea common to all religions and all spiritual disciplines—that we have an immortal soul that is never born and never dies, and that immortal soul only visits this universe in the physical body once, defies common sense to say the least.

If it is immortal, that its consciousness, with the ability to experience different worlds, should earmark out of its unlimited infinite life, only a single visit to this part of creation, looks very improbable. It defies all known laws of probability. In fact, the laws of probability have been manifested so strongly in this created universe, that we are able to calculate so much based only on the law of probability.

The people who make the most use of this are the owners of casinos. I don't know if you know casinos, but the owners of casinos are not gamblers. Visitors to the casinos are gamblers. The owners have a definite calculation based on the law of probability: how many times a thing will happen. And based on that, the probable number—if it is a large number—the probability increases.

So their calculation is based on this: if you have a coin, which has a heads on one side and tails on the other, and if it is a completely equally balanced coin, so that its chance of falling on heads or tails is exactly equal, and you toss it, will it come heads or tails?

You cannot guess. It can come heads or tails. It can come heads or tails ten times, twenty times, one or the other. It may be a combination of the two. You drop it a hundred times, it's very improbable it will come a hundred times heads or a hundred times tails. The law of probability says, most likely it will start dividing between the two. But if you toss the coin a million times—and this has been tested out—if you toss a coin a million times, it will be exactly half a million times heads and half a million times tails.

The coin has no brains of its own. It has no memory of its own. How does it determine that in large numbers, it must fall half and half on heads and tails? What law is determining that? That's the law of probability.

According to the law of probability, a human being, who is born from an immortal soul, must have been born millions of times in the infinite cosmic time that we have lived through, or we are going to live through. So therefore, to assume that we are here only once—it's a very improbable choice.

And then we have evidence that some people even remember not only events: they remember their whole life spent somewhere else. In India, in Rajasthan, in a city called Jaipur, a professor—Dr. Banerjee—made a study. He made an international study to see how many people are there in this world who have remembered their past lives. And he found many cases of that kind. In fact he found thousands of cases, cases that went unreported, till you looked for them and found them. And he found those cases in every country of the world.

The one country that fascinated him the most was Russia—at that time USSR—in which the communist rule had brainwashed the people into believing there is no God, there is no reincarnation. The whole thing is happening physically by laws of physics operating in this world. And therefore to say that we are reborn again is wrong. You are born only once, life comes and dies, and you are gone, and somebody else is born after that.

Dr. Banerjee found one case of a young girl in Russia, who remembered that she was in Japan. She began to utter Japanese symbols, Japanese language, sitting in Russia. She had never been to Japan in this physical body. She began to name the streets of Japan. Dr. Banerjee, in consultation with the Russian authorities, took that girl to Japan, along with Russian scientists and psychologists, to examine if she is really remembering real things that are existing there, or just making up a story. And in Russia, nobody believed, not even the academy of sciences. Their scientists would not believe at all.

So when they went to Japan, they found that she was talking exactly the same things that are already there. She was naming the right streets, naming the right place where she lived, and found out that as a person, she died in Japan and was reborn in Russia. Why did happen? That was another case for examination.

But, the Russian academy of sciences has examined this case and published a paper on it, and they said that we do not believe that there are any souls that reincarnate. We believe that there is a chance of a person remembering these things, which have come from the molecules of the brain, particles of the brain. When the person died in Japan, those particles of the brain that carried the memory were whirled around by the westerly air, and one day happened to be near that woman who was pregnant in Russia. And those brain cells carried the memory and went into this little girl, and she was able to remember some things.

Somebody said, "What are the chances of a brain cell dying in Japan, coming to Russia through the wind flowing? The chances are not even one in trillions, not one in decillions." They said, "But how many chances are there of people remembering their past lives? Very few." So for a while they

stuck to this argument.

But the law of probability convinced them that's not possible. The law of probability does not show that there are one in a trillion people who recall their past lives. There is a much narrower range of people who remember past lives.

So they are still examining that case, and how it is possible for a person born somewhere else to remember places elsewhere. But the research of Dr. Banerjee contains thousands of cases, not just a few. The whole population of the world at that time was only three or four billion, and to have so many cases defied all the laws of probability. And since the law of probability is accepted in mathematics and science, therefore they have had a new look at it.

But whatever it might be, it is now possible for anybody to remember their past life, which makes it easy for somebody who wants to convince himself or herself: "Did I have a past life?" Yes, there is a way to look at it. If it is registered somewhere, then one should be able to find out. If it is registered within one's self, it is easy to find out. You don't have to go to any lab or any other place to find out within yourself.

The truth is that the entire record of our past lives is all recorded inside us, within our mind, within our thinking mind, even if you are thinking right now. It contains the entire record. The only requirement to know whether you had a past life, what you did there, and how come you did certain things which seem to be coming back to you now, including remembering faces of people, having Deja-vu experiences at different places ... Where it is hidden inside you? The easiest way is to go and look up!

If it is in your own mind, you should go and look up and see, is it there? Is the record really there? And is this possibility of going back and looking into your own mind a real possibility, or just a theoretical possibility? No, so many people have proved that you have the capacity to go within yourself, to go within your consciousness, every layer of your consciousness.

And not only the layer that looks at the world through sense perceptions and gives you the impression of what the world is like, which are all sense perceptions arising from stimuli outside, going through the nine large apertures of this body—the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth and the two lower apertures. These are nine doors opening outside which are giving us information about the whole world. And these are being interpreted inside us in a layer of consciousness that enables us to say: I am seeing this, I am hearing this, I am smelling this. All this can be interpreted by just going to one layer inside your own consciousness.

What if you stepped into two layers? What would happen? The moment you are able to go to the second layer, you find the functioning of your own mind. It is the first time you would discover that the mind is not yourself. The mind is not that immortal soul that we are hearing about. The mind was merely a machine, an accessory attached to us. No different than a body being attached to us for a limited time.

If the soul is immortal and the body doesn't even live more than a hundred years or a hundred and

twenty years at the most, and the body dies, where does the soul go? You will also find that the inner self, even the very first layer, has a much longer life than this physical body, and survives thousands of years. You will go and find out that the mind, which is carrying these impressions and memories of past lives, lives even longer: millions of years of earth's time.

Then you discover that the entire record of so many of your lifetimes is all available. The more time you spend, you can go back and study it. This is not something that we are speculating on. This is something anybody can do. The withdrawal of your own attention within yourself enables you to see who you are, enables you to see, what are the different costumes you are wearing, which gives you different characteristics and different properties?

And you will find that the mind, which you are using for thinking, is merely one of those layers: a costume that you are wearing in order to be able to think, in order to have an experience of time and space, which you don't need otherwise.

The soul doesn't need anything! The soul is pure consciousness. Pure consciousness can be conscious of anything it wants to be. It need not be operating in time and space; it need not be operating in one universe or the other; it need not be operating at all! Therefore, our real self is the soul, the immortal soul— never born, never dying— and that power of consciousness encloses itself in these different layers to create different experiences.

The most important layer is the layer of the mind. The mind is the machine that generates an experience for consciousness of time and space, and in time and space, events are placed. You can place events on the time and space that you create: you create a millions years, you create an infinite number of years, and put events on top of them. Then you go over them and you create another law of cause and effect. Events are related to each other, which makes it a beautiful cycle! It makes such a beautiful cycle to put events on a time-space framework made by consciousness, and then you travel on it. It's called time-space and travel, and as you travel, lives are created for you here.

It's happening right now. People say the Egyptians knew how to time travel. Why, you all know it. You're doing it right now! How are you moving in time? It's not that the events are coming and going: you are moving on the events. Events were created at once. All events were placed on a time-space framework at once, and now, we are travelling on them. It's like a time travel, and we think that time is passing.

Of course, at different levels of experience, time passes differently. But that does not mean that the time-space itself is real, and we are just placed temporarily here. We are real! We are always real! We are the only reality! In this entire experience, every other experience disappears. We don't disappear. We never disappear. We are immortal. Souls are immortal, therefore they cannot disappear. They can go from one level to another; they can go into a state without a creation except themselves; they can go into totality of itself; they can go and become one soul, one consciousness and nothing else outside, and then manifest all the other experiences around it again, any number of times.

So our reality is very different from the costumes we are wearing, and we are wearing so many

costumes that we hide deeply inside. If it was only one costume, we could take it off and find out who we are. But if we wear several layers of clothing, you have to take off a lot of clothing to find out who you are.

It's exactly the same here. We first wear the clothing of individuation—that we are individuals, which we are not. We are only one. But we want to wear clothing which makes us separate. It's just a way. It's the most subtle dress that we have. The most subtle dress is, that from one, we have the experience of the many. That we are many, not one. Really we are one, but we want to experience something innate in the nature of consciousness. And I'll describe to you what is innate in the nature of consciousness, and how we have created new qualities for ourselves, for experience, by wearing other costumes.

That innate thing in us, which is love, joy, beauty, in a soul, is natural to the soul; is never acquired; is automatically there. These things are never acquired, but when we put on a costume of the mind around the soul, we get new experiences.

First experience is, there is a vastness around us. We create a vastness around us, instead of the vastness inside us. The vastness belonged to us, but not space-time vastness. It was the vastness of the capacity of consciousness; it was the vastness that the capacity of the consciousness could be as vast as it wanted to be. It was a potential for unlimited experience. That vastness is now transformed into a very limited vastness called space and time.

One costume did it. Not only that, we put life, which was consciousness. Consciousness constituted all life at all times. We put life into this first costume and made it a thinking machine. It began to think: think in words, think in language, think in images, think in symbols, and that was a great experience. It could only think in its created space and time. It was impossible to think outside of that.

So the framework was first created of space and time, and thinking was put into it so that we could all think and become wise people, learned people. We developed languages. We converted the original resonance, power of consciousness, into speech, into thought, into a language of the mind. It was great to have new experiences. Not only that, we created events; we created lifetimes; we created all types of lives that we can live. Every type of life form that can be created was created in the mind.

And then we could go jump in anywhere and see what we liked. It was like a huge show, a big carnival set up so that we could go into any section and enjoy what we like. And we made such a big design, so that consciousness could operate fully in an experiential world that we were creating.

But then, in order to enhance the experience, we put another costume on top of us: the costume of the sensory perceptions; the costume that divided the perception of the mind into different forms. We divided seeing from hearing: that hearing was separate from seeing. Before that we could see and hear simultaneous into the same thing. Now we separated them: smell, tactile sense— all senses we separated, and even intensified further the experience to consciousness to our soul.

We didn't end there. We put on a big third costume: the heaviest costume in terms of physical weight. And that was the physical body. Now here we are all sitting with all these costumes on us, and we are trying to enjoy what we created. It was such a beautiful design. We created means of having experience, and then we generated experience as if the experience had to come from outside.

That required a big art. It was as good an art as the art of cinematography, as the art of filmmaking: that you could make a film, load it into a projector, put the projector behind you in a theater, put light behind the projector, and see the show in front of you, not behind you! The entire film pre-loaded with the whole show intact, is in the film behind us, and we go to a theater and we watch the screen in front. We don't even think that what is happening in front is happening behind us. We don't even think that what is going to come there is already come there: it's just a matter of time; we place time for it to come so we can enjoy the show.

We buy expensive tickets to go to the theater, and the theater is of course a picture, a shadow—sometimes we make them like 3D, 4D; those are different, but still, they are shadows all the time. And we enjoy those shadows. We pay a price for those shadows. If the shadows are comic, we laugh; if they are tragic we cry. We have tears in our eyes. If it is something very shocking, we jump in our chairs in the audience. We are so affected by it, that the drama looks more real than real life. How do we do that? How can we make a shadow on a stage look so real, even though we know it is a shadow, because we are not in that, we are sitting away from it. And still, we can make it so real.

A Greek philosopher, Aristotle, explained how that is done. He says we deliberately want to create on drama—there was no cinema in those days, but drama/theater was there—he says, we deliberately created drama in front of us, so that we can identify with the characters there, and transfer our own emotions to that character, and feel we are connected.

And how do we know it is not theater? We deliberately suppress our knowledge that it is not real. He thinks that this is a deliberate act that consciousness does. In order for the theater, for the movie to be real—at that time he calls it in Greek; translated in English it would be, “a willing suspension of disbelief”: that we would not normally believe it's real—we willingly for that time, suspend our belief, and say, “No, it's real.” Otherwise we wouldn't enjoy it.

So we have a means in consciousness to create reality out of a shadow, and we do it all the time when we go and see a movie. And we forget that. In fact, I have never cried in my life. I don't know, I don't have the tears to cry at anything happening; I take it in a different way. But I always cry in a movie. My kids go with me; they carry extra hankies for my tears.

So, how do we make this? We have an art within consciousness to make something that is not real, for the time being look real. Now imagine, how wonderfully we do this with this act. Where is the projector from where this life is being projected? Inside us, not outside.

Outside is entirely a screen: a four, five, six, now they say eleven dimensional screen, is outside. Scientists now say there are eleven dimensions. Most of them we don't know. But they say molecules travel. Particles can travel to other dimensions, and we don't know them yet. One day we

might find more dimensions, but whatever we see outside, it is a multi-dimensional screen. And the projector is inside; it is projecting through the sense perceptions.

And where is the light? The light is the light of the consciousness. If you take consciousness away the drama ends! If you take life away the drama ends! You go to sleep with your eyes open, you can't see anything. Consciousness has moved away from the seat where it can be seen through the eyes.

So therefore we are making a drama into such reality. We lay down laws of reality, applicable to this show. Now this looks like a grand, grand show going on, and the light of consciousness is projecting something already loaded into us. Therefore it must be the same show every time! We don't believe it. We think, no, we interfere in this show. We make decisions! We have a wonderful instrument in this show which makes us believe that we can change what we like, because we have free will.

Free will means we see options, we see choices, and we decide which choice to follow. If we can do that, how can it be a pre-determined show? It cannot be! It is too interactive with us, with our free will, and we use our free will to change the show; therefore it cannot be pre-determined.

Is it pre-determined or not? This big question has been going on for thousands of years. Some people believe that we cannot have free will. Why? Because they believe in God. And God is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient, which means He knows everything! He knows what decision we are going to make. If He knows, where is the free will then? Then somebody else knows before we make a decision.

If we make a free will decision and God doesn't know what we are going to decide, nobody knows; then only it is really free. If we can make a free decision, and nobody knows—not even God knows in whom we believe—then obviously we are superior to God. His knowledge is less than our knowledge. We are making a decision, and even He doesn't know.

But we all believe in every religion; in every spiritual discipline it says, God knows everything! So if God knows everything, how can our will be free? And yet it looks very free, it looks totally free! Why? Because we see we can go here or there; who is going to stop us?

There was a friend of mine in the university, and I might have told this story earlier but I wanted to tell you because it's interesting. That friend of mine studying in America in Harvard University was studying metaphysics, and was studying the question of free will. He was studying whether we have real free will, or it just appears to be free will. So one day he called me early morning and he said, "I have found out! Eureka! We have no free will."

His main thesis was, the same, that I have just mentioned: that there is a totality of consciousness, there is God—whatever name you give that being or power—that power knows everything, and if that power knows everything before we make a decision, there is no way we make a decision on our own. We have to go consistent with the knowledge of that power.

On this basis he said, "I have found out we have no free will." So I invited him to my apartment. I said, "Will you come over, and we'll discuss this further, if we have free will or not." I used to have these kinds of experiments with my colleagues. So before he came I played a little trick. I prepared

a tray with one cup of coffee, one cup of tea and one cup with nothing in it. So when he arrived, I said, “Would you like to have tea, coffee or nothing? I have got all three ready, and don’t use your free will. You don’t have any.”

He was stumped. He said, “All my major discovery of life, you have destroyed with the cups of tea and coffee?” I said, “I want to prove to you that not only you have free will, you are forced into free will! You are trapped by free will! You cannot do anything about it except to experience free will! It’s a trap! It’s not something that you can say you have it or don’t have it. Even when you say you have it or don’t have it, you are using free will to say that. Therefore, now make your decision, and don’t use free will.”

He said, “I can’t make a decision if I don’t have free will, but I have to have coffee. Now I need more.” I said, “Go ahead sip your coffee. And now I am going to take the Devil’s side and prove to you that you don’t have free will, even in taking coffee. And I won’t go into metaphysics, I won’t go into religion. I’ll go into pure science. I’ll go into the science of how the mind works. I’ll function like a psychologist for a moment. I’ll tell you how we make free choice.”

When we say, freely we want to decide, there is something in your mind telling you which side to go. How do you determine whether to take coffee or tea? What happens when you decide coffee or tea? What happens in your mind when you make a decision—coffee or tea? What are the factors that affect your choice?

So he thought over it, and I mentioned that there are only two kinds of factors. One, genetic: maybe your father liked tea, your grandfather liked tea; it has come into your genes. You are carrying in your DNA molecule the preference for coffee, and you don’t know it! You think you are making the decision now, but the brain is telling you, “coffee, coffee,” because of a genetic tendency. The preference has been pre-recorded in you through genetic tendency.

Or, the second cause can be environmental: that you have sat amongst coffee drinkers; that you acquired a taste for coffee by being with coffee people. There is no third way you can make a decision of any kind in this world: it’s either genetic or it’s acquired through environment, and these two things are completely fixed by the time you make a choice. You can neither change your birth, nor your genetics, nor can you change your past life up to that point which has created your environment. So strictly speaking, on a scientific basis, on the basis of the psychological functioning of the mind, there was no way you could make any other choice.

It looked free to you because you explored these factors of choice; your mind explored and said, “Coffee.” It was based upon something that would only say, “Coffee,” nothing else. So therefore based on purely scientific studies, you would say, you had no free will; it looked like free will.

He liked that argument. It’s a standard argument— that because God knows, therefore I have no free will. Here is another argument saying that we have no free will. But why does it look so free?

It looks so free because of our ignorance. We are ignorant of what’s happening inside our brain; we are ignorant of what’s happening inside our mind; we are ignorant where we are and who we are.

We are totally ignorant! If we were not ignorant, we would know exactly what's happening.

We are living outside of our self. Nobody lives within oneself, they all live outside their selves. And therefore, the wisest people in the world have said that the greatest knowledge you can get is the knowledge of yourself. Socrates said, "Know thyself". Others said, if you can know yourself, you can know God, you can know everything. So knowing yourself is the most important thing you can study.

And do we spend any time in knowing ourselves? No, we spend all our time in knowing what is outside in this show. Not only do we study what is outside of ourselves, we attach ourselves to those things; we begin to desire only things that are outside of ourselves. We get so attached that we become miserable by those attachments and desires. A show that was supposed to be so good, for which we paid a price of covering ourselves with these costumes, and wanted to enjoy and go back home—we are so trapped in that by ignorance of who we are, where our home is, and we are not even enjoying the show for which we came!

We came into this world entirely to have a good time, to have a show that's got ups and downs, to make it more dramatic. It should have pain and pleasure both, otherwise you don't experience either. This world of pairs of opposites, where nothing can be experienced unless you have the opposite of that— instead of enjoying it, what are we doing to it?

Is there a way to start enjoying it even now? I tell you, yes! Just go in and see how it was set up and who you are. You will start enjoying it from day one, from now. It was not meant to be miserable. How did we become so miserable in this world which we created for our enjoyment? We became miserable by forgetting who we are, forgetting where we come from, and thinking this is all real.

It was temporarily made real for us. We deliberately made it real for ourselves to intensify the experience. We did not create a shadow, we created reality! Of course it was created reality. We used a very powerful method of illusion to create reality. We didn't create shadows. We sat in the middle of the stage! We sat on the screen itself! We didn't sit in the audience! We made ourselves a character in the show! Went onto the show, and began to experience the show all around us. And just by doing that, we became miserable.

We were supposed to be more wonderful, more happy that we are right in the middle of the show and we are interacting with everybody. It made the show much greater, much more real. What happened? Some mistake took place somewhere. Something happened.

Now different philosophers, saints, mystics have come again and again and told us what happened. They said, this external show that was built around you for experience, for enjoyment, you began to get attached to it. You desired more and more of what was outside, and the more you desired, the more attached you got. Ultimately you got so attached, that the capacity to pull out of it was lost, and you thought that the whole life was only what was outside of yourself, and never experienced anything inside consciousness: always, what you are conscious of; always the object; you never tried to study what the subject is, never tried to study who was observing this object, who was observing

this world.

Therefore they recommended, try to go within! Try to go and look at your own consciousness, see how it operates. If you regain your knowledge of who you are, how the system operates, you will make it into a wonderful show all over again! And you will make every show that is taking place at every level into a wonderful show. Not only this one!

If we have a dream, we try to make a dream also reality. We in the dream say, "This is real." And if we are not sure, if we sometimes have a feeling, "This could be a dream," what do we do? We ask other people there in the dream. Are you dreaming the same thing? They all say, "Yes!"

"Is it real?"

They all say, "Yes, yes, it must be real. Everybody says it's real."

What is our definition of reality? Our definition is if everybody says they are seeing the same thing, it must be real. In the dream they all say it's real, so we say it's real. When we wake up, there is nobody there at all. We don't go to check with anybody whether it was a dream or not. We awake ourselves and find out that the very proof of finding out it was real or not was part of the dream.

This is a super dream. It's better than that dream. It has more flow of the experience of free will than ever existed in a dream. It's a better dream. Much more real! This is a greatly intensified form of reality than the reality we create in a dream.

But when we wake up from a dream, how do we know we are awake? Because people ask me this question: "You talk about awakening to a higher state of consciousness. How are you sure it is not another dream you are having? How do you know you are not just making it up?"

In the university the psychologists used to ask me: "Don't you think that the mind is capable of making up all these stories that you make up? I said, "I make up good stories. But they make me very happy. You people are miserable! What's the difference? I like the stories that can you make you happy." Anyway, we had different kinds of discussions with different groups.

But the point is, that when we wake up in the morning, even before we have opened our eyes, we have realized that we are lying in bed. All that running around was not being done by the body lying in bed. We don't even open our eyes. We know we are awake. We don't pinch ourselves, "Are we back?" We don't ask anybody, "Am I awake now?" Nobody has ever asked.

Supposing a thousand people came up and that time and said, "You are still dreaming." You'll say, "No I am awake." Where does that certainty come from? Where does this certainty of wakefulness come from?

It comes from its own experience. It changes the experience of a different level of consciousness into the wakeful level of consciousness. It's an identical experience you have when you go to higher level of consciousness. You awake to that consciousness and discover how the dream-like reality was created in the wakeful physical state.

It's not something that you have to speculate upon. When you wake up from a dream you don't speculate, "Am I dreaming or not?" You remember. And now I will tell you the key, why you remember. When you wake up in the morning you remember that you went to the sleep. Supposing you forgot that, you would never know you are awake.

The real secret of the certainty of the wakefulness is that when you awake in the morning, you know you were already there, and it was only a small part of your life that became a dream. In the same way, when you open your eyes to a higher level of awakening in your consciousness, you awaken to a life that was there much earlier than your birth in this life here. You find that you have been here for a long time and have had many dreams like this, and therefore you had many incarnations like this.

You don't go to psychologists to study if you have a past life or not; you don't have to go to regressions of past lives to find out. You can awake to higher life, higher consciousness, and know you were dreaming, but you made the dream into a reality to intensify the experience. We did not come here to enjoy a shadow show; we came here to enjoy a real show. So we had to infuse reality into this, and we used many techniques to bring about that reality in every experience at every level of consciousness.

One of the chief characteristics of each level of consciousness, of wakefulness, is the nature of time, because time-space was the first thing that was created for us to have the experience of all the worlds that have ever been created. All creations of all types are covered by time and space, which go to the level of causal plane or the cosmic level of the mind from where it operates.

Above that, in our true home, there is no space-time or any of these things. It is a potential for creating all those things that exists in our true home. It's an omnibus power that exists there, but the rest is just created as we go into sleep, further sleep, further sleep, dream within dream within dream: it's like that! But every time we create a novel feature in the nature of time.

Now, in a dream, you could be at one point at one time, and within a second you, could be somewhere else. It looks natural. In a dream, you never say, "How did I come here? A few minutes ago I was in another place!" You never think like that. You don't even make choices: "Where do I want to go?" It just suddenly comes. All those things you think you have as choices, but you are awake by the time you try to make a major choice.

There is something strange about a dream which is not real in terms of time. It is very different. You wake up: "Oh, the time! It's now 8'o clock; it's now 7' o'clock." Who is governing the time in the physical world? Not us. Clocks. Watches. Do you know, if you are sitting with friends and it looks like just fifteen minutes passed, and the watch says one hour, you believe one hour, not the fifteen minutes. If you are trying to meditate, and you say, "I meditated two and a half hours," and you wake up and see ten minutes! You would rather believe the two and a half hours.

We are so governed in this physical world, the physical world of this wakefulness, on external definition of time! You have changed the definition. We are no longer defining time by what we are experiencing! We have undone our own experience by saying that the clock knows better than I

know! That's the nature of physical time.

But the physical time has another big problem. The physical time creates a past, a present and a future, and the past never comes back. It's a limitation. In a dream, past can come back somewhat, a little bit. We can jump from one scene to another and see dead people, and they are still alive in a dream. In this physical world dead people don't come back because they were in the past. And what is going to happen tomorrow, we don't know. We plan for it; sometimes the plans don't work. Future is unknown; past is gone. We are out of control!

Well, at least we have the present to live in, don't we? We should live in the 'now.' There was one philosopher saying, "The only place to live in is now," and I asked him a question: "Where do you live otherwise?" You never live anywhere else except in Now. There is no other time to live in except now.

Now, look at the wonder of this 'now'. That 'now' has no time! Before I uttered the word 'now' it was future; the moment I uttered it was past. Where was the 'now?' There is no now at all. The present has no duration whatsoever, not even a billionth part of a nanosecond. It's just a meeting place between the future and the past.

Therefore when we say we are living in the present, what does it mean? We are misleading ourselves. We say we are living in the present; the present has no time! Can you live in the past? Maybe we can, maybe we are. Maybe we are living in the last few moments and we call it present. Maybe we are calling the recent past as present.

Most of us say, "I am giving you a talk in the present!" Well, before I said that was future, after it is past. I never said it in the present! There is no way you can do anything in the present! You need time to do anything in this world, and you have no time in the Now. When do you do it then? If you examine this proposition alone, you will find out that we could never create a new life. It is a life that was already there and we were pulling it out from the past. The past is being called 'now' and the past is already there.

How do we live in the past? How can anybody have any idea of the past? Only one way: memory. You can recall the past; you can't do anything to it. You can't change it, but you can recall it, you can remember it. If you examine life from that point of view, are introspective enough, you will find that our life is merely a replay, a recall of recorded things that happened somewhere, and we call it the past.

Well you might say, "Ok, forget the present and the past, what about the future?"

Let's examine what is future in terms of time. If we delete three words from all dictionaries, in English, spoken of as hope, fear, anticipation—which are really the same thing: hope is positive anticipation and fear is negative anticipation; anticipation is neutral—if we take these three out of the dictionaries and these functions don't exist, there is no future whatsoever. The future disappears along with these three words. Because unless we hope, unless we fear, unless we anticipate, there is no future at all! The mind does not comprehend any future except in these three categories.

So when you think of it, to hope requires time; to fear requires time; to anticipate requires time. What requires time is in the past. So the whole future is in the past. Just a study of the nature of time in the physical universe would tell you that there is no future, no present, it's only all past. We are living in the past through memory. The memory cells have been planted into us, and as we recall, it becomes life for us. That's how we are living. It's just a study of introspection, of going within yourself. You go even one step inside, you can see these things.

And we created a real new life. We don't know what is going to happen now, we have to make plans for this, and we make plans as if this is the only reality. Our functioning of the consciousness at the physical plane gives us the feeling of free will; that free will makes plans and we make plans. Sometimes they happen, sometimes not.

Ninety year old people come to me: "I'm making a plan. I'm going to build a house; in ten years it will be ready." Next year he has gone somewhere else. We make plans so far ahead of us. We think everybody else will die, and we are going to live here forever. I don't know how this happens!

We try to make those things ours which we know will never go with us! We try to collect things: "I have a new house, I have a new car, I've got this new furniture I just bought. Wonderful! And I am going to buy some more things!" And we try to make people our own: "Oh this is my children, my wife, my parents." It's all, "My, my, my," and nothing goes with us. When we die, we just go empty handed, completely! Nothing whatsoever goes with us.

The story is told of Alexander the Great who came to India, and he robbed people, looted people to develop empire. And he attacked the temples: most of all the Hindu temples which had lot of gold and jewelry. He gathered all that and put it on his horses and camels.

That big procession of his animals and soldiers was going back, and as you might know—those students of history might know it—he died on the way. He could not reach Egypt, he could not reach Alexandria, the town that was named after him; he could not reach because he fell so sick.

They were passing through the desert area where he died. And when he died he said, "All the money that I have got, I am willing to give to get enough breathing space, enough life, to reach back home." And the accompanying physician said, "Sorry, Alexander, your time is up. Nobody can save you now." He said, "Not, but I can't die, because when I was young, a gypsy told me that, "Alexander, you are immortal, you will only die when the earth turns into silver and the sky turns into gold. Only then you can die." And he said, "How can I die?"

Well, he was so sick in the desert, there was no place to go to. He had silver armor which they carried for him. They spread that on the ground. And he a big umbrella made of gold which they put on top of him. When they saw the silver below him, and the gold above him, he knew the time has come.

And then he ordered: "When you take my body and bury me, please keep my hand outside of the coffin, and leave it open like this. The whole world should know that even Alexander the Great died with nothing in his hands, empty handed." That's what they did. They kept the hand outside the

coffin and they buried him.

So these are stories to tell us nothing goes with us! And how much time and attention we give to acquiring things and acquiring friendships and relationships, as if they will go with us. Nothing goes with us. And how much time we spend on this, how much attention we give to this.

Attention is the most valuable faculty we have in consciousness, because it is something we can place where we like. Other things we can't change. We are sitting here; whatever is around us is around us. Consciousness does not operate to change the scene, but it does help us to use attention, to place our attention where we like.

If I ask you to look in that corner, you all start looking, and your attention goes there. I say, "Read a book," and your attention goes in the book. Attention is the only part that is manageable, that is available to you to move where you like. It's the only part of consciousness that we can move. It's the most valuable part of consciousness available to us in the physical world and any other world.

And yet what are we doing with this attention? We are using that attention to acquire things, to start overcoming our loneliness which is occurring inside. We try to overcome loneliness by making relationships outside. We are looking for all happiness outside. We are looking for things that don't exist outside, and all our attention is going outside.

Then what is the answer? The answer is, put your attention back into yourself! Withdraw your attention. Why throw it around aimlessly like we have been doing all our life? Withdraw your attention.

But then we don't know how to withdraw our attention. Why? We never did it. From birth, as an infant, our attention was pulled out. There were little gags, toys ... "Now he can hear very well. The baby can hear us." And we draw the attention out and till death the attention remains out. We never practiced withdrawing of our attention within ourselves. We've only practiced how to throw attention out to different things.

So therefore, sometimes it looks a little difficult and odd as to how to withdraw attention within yourself. And yet the secret of knowing who you are is withdrawal of attention. It's the secret to discover: which is your inner cover? How do sense perceptions operate? How does the mind operate? How does the thinking process take place? Where do the thoughts come from? Where is the storage of all the elements that create destinies for you in this life? Where are your previous lives? Where are your future lives written up already, ready to go through?

All that can only be experienced if you withdraw your attention within yourself, which we haven't practiced. It looks very difficult. But that's the answer. Who are you? Why not withdraw your attention to where you are and not look at the covers upon yourselves. Again, it requires withdrawal of attention.

So the secret is withdrawal of your attention to find all the answers to all the questions that you ever have. You can ask any question, the answer is within you. By withdrawal of attention you get the answer. You don't have to ask anybody; you don't have to go to a library; you don't have to read

books. All these books and libraries have been created from the knowledge lying inside of the human brain, and the human brain has been separated into different minds by the process of creation of this drama.

Otherwise there is only one brain; there is only one mind; there is only one soul. It has all been divided into multiplicity. It is like looking at a mirror which has small, small mirrors all around, and we see so many images of ours. All the people that we meet are images of our own self. How will you know that? By looking at the self. There is no other way to find out.

Therefore withdrawal of attention within yourself is the secret for all answers to all questions. If you want to withdraw attention, you must learn how to withdraw and not to project. We are used to focusing attention, which is a projection of attention away from yourself. You can never focus attention on anything except by moving away from yourself. Therefore if you want to be where you are, you don't focus attention, you don't project your attention. You withdraw it!

Withdraw where? Wherever you are! It doesn't matter; we don't have to search where we are. We know where we are! We are exactly where we are experiencing life from. Where are we experiencing life as consciousness? As units of consciousness, where are we experiencing life from?

First of all, where are we experiencing this body from? Well, we know this body is something, inside of which, we have not gone. We are sitting in the body. What can we know through the body? We can know there is a physical world outside. Do you know if you take this body away, there is no physical world? The body creates the physical world. You go to an ethereal world of sense perceptions only, sometimes called the astral world, Suksham Shareer, fine world. You go into that: where is that world? If you take this body away, the other body is there.

All worlds are created by the body you are wearing, and your true home is created when you wear nothing: no costume. That's your true home, Sachkhand. It's so simple. The system is so simple: that you cover yourself with this; you withdraw your attention to the level you want; discard the outside covers, and you will find out who you are.

This was the simple principle of all meditation in all spiritual disciplines throughout the world, in every discipline, every religion in the world. I've made a study of it. It all started from there—know yourself, go within. The real kingdom is inside you; the real nature of God is inside you; whether you are separate from God inside you; all questions are answered inside you. And to go inside, we have been given the capacity to go inside. We have been given attention which can be placed where you like. What a wonderful thing!

When you find you are in a physical body, and you want to know where are you—if you are not a body, if it's just a covering upon you—where are you in the body? Are you at any one single point or are you just scattered? Or are you at one point with your attention scattered? When you examine that, you find you are only at one point, and the attention has been scattered throughout the body, and through the body, throughout the world.

It's a scattered attention. When you try to remember something, you pull up because you have

scattered your attention everywhere. So we are now living in a state of scattered attention. When we withdraw attention, the scattered attention gathers back and comes back to us.

If you have ever seen a person dying—those who work in hospitals see them very often, or in terminal places where people are still dying slowly and you can see them dying—if you see people dying, even in the physical body, they don't die all of a sudden and go away somewhere. They die in stages. The patient dying doesn't know where the feet have gone, where the hands have gone, and doesn't know where the legs have gone, where the arms have gone.

It looks like there is a process of withdrawal of life. It keeps on withdrawing, and the patient is talking to you: "Can you stretch my leg?" It's already stretched. "Can you place my hand on the left side?" It's already there. They don't know they are losing consciousness. They are losing life force from the extremities. It keeps on going even from the torso, and they think they are flying in the sky, because they have lost the lower consciousness. They are still speaking to us.

When they come right up to here, they can't speak, but they can see. You can see their eyes, and when they come up here they are dead almost in the whole body. And when the brain dies right behind the eyes they are dead. They are completely dead. Brain death is the real death.

Which means, even by observing them, we see that the life—the attention scattered, it was scattered in the body to give the body experience—is being withdrawn in a particular order. If you meditate and put your attention behind the eyes, at that very point from where it is being scattered, you will have the same experience of withdrawal of attention from the world, and withdrawal of attention from the body in the same order. Very often this kind of experience has been called dying while living, because you can have the same experience of death without dying.

There was a famous maharishi, a saint in India called Ramana Maharishi. How did Ramana Maharishi become a rishi? Before he was a rishi, he was very sick, and he had one attendant with him who used to be there. One day he got very sick and he had sent the attendant, this servant of his, to go and buy something.

When the servant was away and he was alone, he felt he was dying. He said, "Oh nobody is around me. I am going to die alone!" He got into a panic about dying, and then he thought, "What will happen when I die?" My legs will become straight, they will become stretched like this, and my breathing will stop. And then he pretended that he was dying, and he stretched his arms: "Rigor mortis has occurred now." And he said, "Now my eyes can't see anymore and I am closing my eyes. I can't hear. I am dying."

Then he said, "Who is this speaking inside you? 'I am dying.' This is speaking louder than ever before! There is something in me that is not dying at all, becoming more alive! Even when I pretend to be dying, it is becoming more alive. What's that?" And it was his search for that which was speaking in him, saying "I am dying"—who is saying that?—that led to his search for himself. And he became a maharishi eventually by going deeper and deeper into his own consciousness.

So the point is that meditation has always been a practice of finding the truth within yourself, of

withdrawing your attention to the point from where it's originating. It does not stay always here. If it stayed always here, we would know exactly where it is. When we are awake, like we are now, looking totally awake in the physical plane, it's right behind the eyes, in the middle of the eyes, a little behind, almost in the centre of the head, almost where the anatomy people say is just below the hanging pituitary body, or the pineal gland—on one side of the pineal gland, right in the middle!

Now when you think of it, are you really there? Let's contemplate. If you are merely one unit of consciousness, are you really there? You'll find you can close your eyes and locate: yes, that's where you are operating from. You are not operating from your hands or your legs or something; these are extended parts of you. You are scattered, but you are really there.

Now, it doesn't always stay there. That's why it's good to practice meditation or withdrawal of attention to discover who you are when you are awake. Don't try when you are sleeping, for the simple reason that you are no longer there when you are sleeping. This is just a focal point in the body; it's a focal point where you operate as consciousness experiencing this world through a physical body. When you are in the wakeful physical state, then alone you are behind the eyes.

What happens when you go to sleep? This point begins to descend. It goes down. When you are having a dream you are in the throat; you have come down that much. And when you have a deep sleep, when you don't remember your dreams, you have even gone further. And the yogis, by the yogic practice on the six centers of energy below, they have gone even to the lowest and risen to the highest centers. So these are the different levels to which you can go.

Any proof that this happens? I give a simple proof to everybody. Tonight when you go to sleep, before you actually sleep but when you so are so sleepy, almost sleeping, then try an experiment. And that is, touch your eyes with your hands. Right now, with your eyes closed, if I say touch your eyes, you will touch your eyes, you know where they are. No problem. At that time do the same thing. You will touch your nose and think you are touching your eyes. You can actually feel the focal point of consciousness, the location of that point, going down, moving.

It is not permanent—what is around it is not permanent; *it* is permanent. It doesn't move; experience moves around it. We never move, we never go anywhere. We never left our home; we are still there, everything is being built around us. And by going within, you can find out how these experiences are being generated outside.

If it is as simple as this, that the point from where consciousness is operating, which is yourself, is in the physical body behind the eyes, meditation should be simple. Withdraw your attention to that point. It may need some practice; it may need some perseverance, some time, because you have to reverse your common habit of projecting attention and pulling it back. But if you practice it, you will get it.

How many of you would like to practice it while still here? Are you coming tomorrow? We'll practice it, so that it no longer remains a theory. It's something we can practice right now; you can start right now. So tomorrow I am going to spend time with you to practice how to withdraw your attention to that point which we call the third eye center, the center of consciousness in the wakeful

state in a physical body. From there, you can open up everything.

Sometimes we refer to it as the tenth door. The nine doors that open outward are those which connect us with the experience outside. They don't give us anything about inside. And this thing—by pulling your attention behind you open a tenth door—opens up the possibilities of your seeing your inner self without these covers, one after the other. You can die while alive, completely alive, vitals forces still working, pulse rate the same, breathing the same, and you are experiencing withdrawal of yourself from the body just by going to that third eye center.

It's great! Even for people who are merely curious it's great! To find out, is it really possible? In the physical body do we have all the experiences? And why didn't we have it so far? It's never too late. You can do this practice anytime. A child of five years old and an old man of hundred years old can practice it.

It's a natural thing; nobody has planted it into you. Nobody has planted it into any saints, prophets or others. You have the same capacity that all the saints and prophets ever had. This is built into you. It is a gift from God. It is a gift from the creator; it is your own gift to yourself when visiting this place, to have a way to open up to go back home when you want to. It's your own stuff; it belongs to you. The spiritual path does not belong to any religion, does not belong to any nationality, does not belong to any gender, does not belong to anybody, but to everybody. Every human being has the same capacity to go within.

And I want to show you, you don't have to change anything, except to make it easier to practice the withdrawal of attention inside and get the results for yourself. Do not believe anybody, don't believe a single word of mine, unless you have tested it out for yourself and seen that this is really possible. Your own experience should be its own validation, not somebody saying it.

“Because somebody said it, I believe it.” That's called blind faith. In true spirituality there is no place for blind faith. It's based upon experience alone: your own experience. So tomorrow, let's try and work out something and see what's inside us. It's great. Thank you very much for being very, very patient listeners. I am very happy to be back in London and to see all of you. I'll see you again tomorrow. Thank you.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzYsjhSwVeU>

Published by ISHA. All rights reserved. This English transcript of a YouTube talk by Ishwar C. Puri is published under a CC BY-NC-SA license, which means that you can copy, redistribute, remix, and freely distribute sections of the transcript, provided that any derivative works or new resulting creations are not used for any commercial purpose and as long as you give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. License details: creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/ Copyright 2019. Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC BY-NC-SA).