

The Realization of Galen Sharp ~ An excerpt from the book *What Am I?*

Many years ago, I had been doing the "Fasting of the Mind" as detailed at the beginning of this chapter as much as possible for two or three weeks solid. I was working at home at the time and was able to devote a good part of the day to it. When I had a task to do, I just did it and returned to the fasting as soon as possible.

One Sunday afternoon, the house was quiet and I was sitting on the couch "fasting." I had become so accustomed to doing it every spare moment that I truly had forgotten about any benefits or any reason for doing it. So I was not trying to accomplish anything or to have any experience.

We have a clock on the mantel which ticks very loudly. Without attempting to, and I don't know how it happened, I begin to feel the ticks within my body, and then I *was* the ticking. Even my heartbeat was synchronized with the ticking of the clock.

Just then I felt my "self" actually, physically, plunge downward with great force. The thought came: "I just am." The thought was not *my* thought but just *a* thought. The ancient Ch'an Masters described this as being like the bottom falling out of a bucket of water you are carrying, and that is just how it was. I'm describing this in words and thoughts, but at the time there were no words or thoughts happening, just the naked sense that "I just am." I was not apart from it but had no intellectual or volitional part in it. It just happened spontaneously.

When the self fell away, all that was left was what I can only describe as "am-ness." I was not anyone or anything. I was obviously, clearly just the am-ness of all, the being and actuality of all, and all was just as it should be. This didn't mean that everything was the way the mind would like it to be or that the mind's desired ideals were fulfilled or unfolded according to the mind's concepts of good and evil. Things are always just as they should be according to our True Being or our "Real Self" – as they *must* be at this moment. This is harmony with the universe.

An imperfect analogy would be something like a play or movie, where everyone was playing their part perfectly. Some were "good" and some were "bad," but that was how the story was supposed to go.

There was an overwhelming sense of total completion and total fulfillment. This sense of total completion permeated the entire universe. I felt that this must be the "bliss" spoken of in eastern philosophy as well as the "peace that passes understanding" in the Bible. However, it is not a feeling, it just *is*.

Then, a few moments later, time and space dissolved. And with it, all phenomenality, all perceptions, everything that was appearing. That, too, was "as it should be."

When space and time dissolved, the only way to articulate it is that, in one timeless moment, I was *everyone and everything* that ever was and is and will be. All this was actually lived in less than an instant. On later reflection I understood it was what we call eternity, and this is my (our) very being.

I must assume this experience is what some have called "Universal Consciousness" or "Cosmic Consciousness" for "God" or just "the All." This was far more "real" than what we experience as everyday waking reality. My True Being was actually God's being – not just a *part* of it, but *all* of it. As an individual self, I was not God. There was no individual self, but only God, appearing as what-we-are.

This was not a vision nor even a new state of mind. It was just what is when the mental processes stopped over-interpreting the raw phenomenal perceptions and just let go of its imagined need to control the mental processes.

The next thing that happened was that this Universal Consciousness also dissolved. However, there is no way to even indicate in any way what was "upstream" of the Universal Consciousness. There is no way to express this.

Afterward, I could only assume that this is what has been referred to by the great Ch'an and Vedanta Masters as the "Absolute," which is ultimately what we all are as noumenal, original aspect. This might be conceptualized as "upstream" or beyond Pure Consciousness, but to make any kind of concept about this is grossly misleading. It can only be a condescension to indicate "it" with any word as it cannot ever be "it."

This experience then reversed itself, and as time and space returned, so did phenomenality and the thought came of itself to "just be." This "re-entry" carried the understanding that being what-we-are is the easiest thing in the world because it is spontaneous. It happens by itself. It is absolute rest. This is all we ever have to "do" or can do. Yet, even that happens by itself when the mind lets go. The sense of total completion, total fulfillment was still there.

The only problem with "just being" is that, ordinarily, the mind won't cooperate and must assert the sense of volition as it operates. It can only lose this habit and "let go" as understanding penetrates and dissolves this illusion. This, in essence, is really the only thing obscuring our actuality, our absolute rest and total liberation.