

The Radiant Flow of True Self

Bill Isaacs: Human beings live for the most part in a splintered and fragmented world, a world of separation. This appears to most people as an inevitability, a fixed inexorable reality to which one must simply adjust. People are divided from one another; nations are suspicious and at times hostile or worse; organizations have “siloes” separate units; political tribes live in their own “echo chambers.” The experience is so complete that questioning it seems to be an exercise in futility, a kind of intellectual or spiritual fantasy. So-called serious people dismiss the idea that there might be any way around this. Yet there are all kinds of reasons why that thought might be challenged.

For instance, there are now excellent scientific studies that point to the remarkable and delicate balance that the whole of the earth maintains, and has maintained, for millions of years. These analyses are typically done in the context of pointing to the system boundaries that human beings are pushing beyond. The data is remarkably robust on these points. Even so, the majority view remains that while some kind of wholeness might be present at the level of physical systems, integration, cooperation and coordination among human beings is nothing you can really count on. A zero-sum game is the cold reality. The fragmentation is very persistent; it's been present and entrenched for a very long time. While there are some signs now of a gradual shift in view, it is worth spending a bit of time understanding this dominant view, the perception that pervades every organization, every government, most families, most people, that somehow or other separation is the norm and that anything else is a rare exception.

The persistence of fragmentation does engender constant efforts to do something about the unintended impacts of it. We are surrounded by earnest efforts to produce change. People see problems and imbalances environmentally, economically, or socially, and go about trying to correct them. But inevitably the cure tends to make the illness worse. That is because the impulse to improve the human condition itself emerges from the fragmented experience of the humans seeking to make the improvement. And that idea itself tends to go unseen, unacknowledged or is dismissed. After all, where else could that impulse come from? But always, when the motive flows from an individual point of view that is in some way or other disconnected from the larger whole, invariably what emerges is more trouble.

Unfortunately, these unintended effects are not often seen at first. Part of the reason is that there are often lengthy delays between the actions people take and the effects that eventually appear. A classic example is global warming. Nobody really envisioned that the industrial age, which began around one-hundred-and-fifty some years ago, would inevitably produce a transformation in the composition of the atmosphere of the planet that would lead to catastrophic levels of warming. No one intended that. The effects are still mostly invisible and out of mind, except that people have now heard about this and at least some are actively working to solve it. In other words, the source of the impulse and its effect are separated in time, sometimes measured in centuries. There is also separation in physical space. Action over here affects something over there, but the connections are hard to discern. The human intellect is not very good at perceiving

the impacts of its own actions. It is also not particularly good at picking up on its own incoherence. We try to make an improvement over here, which produces some pattern of local coherence. We get more organized, but then that produces effects over there that start to be incoherent and disconnected. There are many examples of this. Fossil fuels is one.

Smokey the Bear is another. In the United States, everybody knows Smokey the Bear. "Only you can prevent forest fires," was the saying planted in people's minds many years ago. Except that it turns out Smokey the Bear was a disaster for the climate because preventing naturally occurring forest fires led to the buildup of the scrub and underbrush that fuels fires. And so instead of having naturally occurring fires every 15 years or 18 years or 40 years, that were on balance, good for forests, these were suppressed. And when fires inevitably finally struck, they were explosive, burning so hot that in some cases nothing can ever grow back, leaving what veteran wildland firefighters call "moonscape." And we now see in many places in the world transformations in the landscape that have evolved from well-intended but unwittingly fragmented thoughts.

Fragmentation also appears internally, within human consciousness. Not only is there separation between people one from another, or between people and nature, where we don't necessarily see the impacts of our actions, the fragmentation also appears within us. There are multiple parts to individuals, each of which act at times independently. Sometimes these parts act without the other parts realizing it. This is often thought of as multiple personality disorder, but it turns out that is an exaggerated and extreme version of something within everyone. Put another way there are fragmented "subprograms" or sub-personalities active in everyone.

We have all experienced this. When you come down to breakfast some mornings you don't always know who you're going to encounter. When you talk to someone one day, you might find a pleasant person. The next minute it could be radically different. I'm sure we've noticed this in ourselves as well. And the changes occur like lightening. The story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde illustrates this pattern. People carry internal fragmentation and a diffused or fragmented experience of themselves.

The experience of these reactive parts obscures the experience of oneSelf. Many of these parts are troubled by memories frozen in the past. The parts masquerade as you, to the point where it's very unclear to people which one is the real them. This internal confusion and its origins are what I'd like to have us consider.

Understanding with greater clarity the nature of one's true Self does not require long hours of incense-filled meditation in remote locations in the mountains. It does not require pledging obedience to some distant God, local guru, or frankly, anything else to allow this confused and fragmented experience to heal. The experience of healing and the emergence of a clear, whole, compassionate, creative Self is available to anyone anywhere because as they say in Detroit "it's original equipment." It was always there. It is always here. There is one whole true Self. The trouble of course, is that even people who know this to be true will at times find that their subprograms, their internal parts, reassert themselves. These fragmented parts comprise a condition not unlike an inner mob, an inherited state of subconscious and fragmented internal confusion. These internal "parts" relate also to much more than one's own personal history. We

have the whole within us, extending to wider patterns of collective experience and history, and much more beyond that. Somehow all this needs to be clarified and healed.

Addressing this, while eminently possible, also turns out to require very deliberate work. While the original equipment of oneSelf is certainly present, it needs to be activated and expressed to be known. And not only activated once, but continuously, moment by moment, to allow the reintegration and healing of these burdened elements. The experience of an obscured sense of Self and the polarization internally that strikes people can be very confusing and disorienting. And again, as I mentioned, this appears in most people's experience as an inevitability. The belief arises that you're stuck with these troubling elements, no matter how much "work" you do. But the conviction of the inescapability of fragmentation is simply false. It is one of the fundamental big lies that human beings have accepted. You are not stuck with these burdens—none of us are. We can have deep confidence that these burdens can be absolutely healed and permanently so, precisely because there is an already whole Self present to allow that to happen.

This same confidence can also be offered, not just to one's own inner mob, but beyond oneself. This describes the true nature of leadership—the externalized expression of internal wholeness. For this confidence to have value, however, it must be based on something real.

Let's examine briefly how these things work. Often, the partial patterns that appear and masquerade as oneSelf have strong emotional currents attached to them. And one of the habits that often gets exercised is that we try to fix the fragmentation with fragmentation, meaning one part tries to lecture, control or repress other parts. You may have noticed that that doesn't change things, but merely (at best) keeps everything in check.

To shift this pattern, you must bring to it a different quality of energy, Self-energy, the true Tone of the Self, into these burdened or challenged parts of ourselves. In doing so, a vital step to learn is to avoid pathologizing or condemning these things, even if what comes up is very problematic, difficult, or even violently reactive. Having compassion towards these factors in ourselves (and in others) is what puts us in position to heal them. Now, this may sound like a remedial exercise, necessary only for the most traumatized among us, or perhaps something for a beginner. But sustained clarity requires continuous effort and attention for everyone. Mastery is not about never losing balance, but about rapidly and continuously regaining it through sustained focus. To walk is to continuously lose and regain balance. And as I mentioned, what arises is not limited to one's own personal history but is part of the collective conditioning of all human consciousness.

One of the side effects of the phenomenon of internal fragmentation is self-deception. When a part of us overly influences or colors our expression, we tend not to realize that this is happening. One part of us is activated, but it has taken over and obscures matters, and we frequently do not recognize it or cannot help ourselves. We become identified with the part that is activated and lose touch with ourSelves. Often this is quite evident to others, even if it isn't to us. A simple test: to the degree that any reaction overly occupies your consciousness, grabs you, you can bet that you are being controlled by something other than who You are.

We do not need to be identified with any of these reactive parts. But we do need to work with them, moment by moment, piece by piece, to allow the changes to occur. This is the condition we are in, one where we need to bring the radiance of ourselves to bear continuously. This a specific kind of constant inner work. To reclaim and reintegrate consciousness, to restore an understanding of the eternal nature of ourSelves, we need to update all these inner patterns, which have been quite literally unaware of our Presence.

This can at times be a bit of a head turner. When you take the time to do it, you can inquire of these parts, as they arise, as to what they think, treating them as inner objects you could explore. And if you make space, they'll speak to you. And they'll tell you things, including that they had no idea that you were there or perhaps are afraid of you, or are afraid you aren't up to the task of living your life. It's odd, but creative. Inner rewiring and reintegration also impacts the physiological level, and can assist in healing the impacts of fragmentation within the physical body. The elements that have been turbulent or polarized begin to settle.

This recognition of the wholeness of Being, of oneSelf, in the midst of a fragmented state raises a further question. How did we get here?

The origins of this condition are shrouded in myth and mystery. But an inquiry into origins can be valuable. As an illustration, there is a brilliant book by a woman named Isabel Wilkerson called *Caste* that illuminates some of the deeper sources of the problem of race in the United States. The racial patterns present at the founding of this country are still operational, down to the present day. For instance, this past week the Governor of Georgia in a carefully staged photo op with a painting of black men on a plantation in the background proudly signed into law a bill that made it a crime to give people food and water while they wait in voting lines. This is an echo for historians of Jim Crow laws that were passed in the latter part of the 19th century, meant to suppress black votes.

Wilkerson shows that efforts to repress one part of society over another are more a reflection of a caste mentality, like that in India and other places, than race *per se*. The origin of this problem, she argues, goes deeper than race—seeking to propose a vision of a divided and hierarchical society that can never manifest equality.

What's insightful and interesting about this analysis is its focus on origins. To understand the origin of something, is to look for the cause of it, and as a result to be in position to heal it (the most ancient root of the word *origin* is “to move, to set in motion”). So, what is the origin, the cause, of the splintered state in consciousness? How did we get here? One origin story everyone knows is the idea that mankind was somehow cast out of the garden, separated from a state of integrated wholeness. We were then somehow left to operate outside the range of that wholeness, and ever since have been eating of the "dust of the ground" as it was put. We were in other words cast into a state of primary orientation in form, and largely lost consciousness of what is behind the forms.

What is behind the forms is the luminous presence of oneSelf, individual and collective. The return to integration with these undimensional levels of wholeness requires a deliberate continuous choice, a choice to recall and reclaim what already Is. Doing this immediately puts us back in the position to bring healing to the now devolved and fragmented state within ourselves.

Taking responsibility in this way also makes obvious that this work is a vital part of what we are here on earth to do. The origin of the problem was the choice to turn away from the control of Being. This fundamental act has produced everything that has occurred since. To generate a change, we must therefore consciously shift this core orientation in ourselves. Of course, a change of this kind however, once taken, doesn't immediately manifest in an amplified external sense. It didn't in the past, and it does not now. There are a whole set of things that have to work out, at many levels of experience, throughout the whole of human experience.

One could get impatient. How long is this going to take? There is little value in speculating. But just as it is possible to sense the movement of the tide as you stand at the edge of the ocean, it is also possible to sense the intensification of the impulse towards integration. Participating accurately, and in alignment with this intensifying surge requires very personal, very immediate and continuous work.

I want to review a couple of simple steps that can be helpful in allowing this restorative work to occur personally. You could consider whether they're relevant for you.

The first concerns how we might handle patterns of reaction that may arise in ourselves, whatever they are, and however intellectually we might rationalize or justify them. We typically tend to try to control or suppress or perhaps transcend these things. Instead, you can ask a question, one that unlocks your own radiant presence and allows it to flow into the situation. The question is, "How do I feel towards the pattern that's emerging?" "How do I feel towards this part of me?"

This turns out to be a quite subtle question. Often the answers that first come up include: "I don't like it much" (or worse). "It doesn't belong here." "I wish it were not here." "I shouldn't get involved with these things," *et cetera*. But it is quite helpful to see that if you set each of these reactions aside, clear some space, and simply ask the question again, "How do you feel towards this?" you can find a stance of compassion towards whatever it is that is arising in you. And that shift reattunes the pattern, allowing new insight about what is really going on—which is often not at all what it initially seemed. It also allows space for change. You may need to do more to release fully whatever it is that arises, but the question opens a door. It reactivates and updates consciousness again, to the reality of oneSelf.

Here is another question you can ask that is also quite helpful. When a troubled thought arises in you, you can inquire of yourself, "How do I react when I believe this thought?" And then "Who would I be without the thought?" What can easily come clear through these practices is that You are not the thought pattern that has been activated. But more than this, you are step by step making space for healing in your consciousness, integrating the fragments, from the standpoint of Being.

This last question was developed by a woman named Byron Katie and the first one by a family therapist called Richard Schwartz. Both are examples of an emerging vanguard, people who are seeking to give others concrete ways to reactivate their own sense of who they are in very immediate non-complicated ways. But I think they are useful questions for anybody.

Another question you could ask, when reflecting on challenging situations you have to handle is, "What is the quality of space I hold—for the situation, for the people in it? For myself?" What is the quality with which you hold this space?

Answering each of these questions requires honesty, and a bringing forward of one's own Self, one's own presence, because invariably there's refining to be done. This refining is very generative because it activates finer perception, which enables more factors to be clarified. These three questions activate three dimensions of consciousness at ever-intensifying levels of Self: at the level of immediate reactions, at the level of thought, and at the level of the field that emerges through one's living.

Finally we come to the immediacy and the wholeness of this moment, the vastness of the present moment. We are no longer thinking of something that might be or that has been; we're occupied with the totality of what's happening now, the cycles that have been unfolding, and in so doing we bring a confidence and radiance to bear on everything we touch. I was reminded of these few wonderful lines from William Blake, thinking about this fourth dimension of the healing of Self:

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.*

(Auguries of Innocence, William Blake)

There is a magnificence to the present moment and to the Presence of our true Self that is Undimensional Being, that knows the realms of eternal being, and that is in position to reclaim its ground here and now. There is a huge recreative flow underway facilitating and enabling this to happen. It is available to anyone, anywhere. One clear effect of the recreative flow is rising global turbulence. And just as must occur within ourselves, there must be people in position to hold, without condemnation, compassionately and powerfully, this rising turbulence; to see it not as evidence of disaster, but as evidence of a healing process, which is what it is, made so when there are people with the awareness on hand to encompass it.

The turbulence looks quite messy. All the fragmented subconscious burdens that have populated human consciousness for millennia are being lifted up. The question is, who is there to allow these factors to be healed? We don't need to speculate as to how many people are required. We can certainly tell that we're not alone. We act to reveal the origin and the stance of governance that comes from it. This is more than a mission; it's simply the natural thing to do.

We are oriented not in what is changing, but in the radiant outflow. This can appear to human eyes to be of little consequence. But that is because everyone has been focused on the forms, not the radiation, not in what is back of the forms. The radiation is invisible, or more subtle. It is very possible to know eternity in this radiant flow. And to recognize the power of it, and the reintegration that is occurring because of it. The authority in this belongs naturally to each of us. It is always available, and simply needs our consistent expression.

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Pre-Service Music

Berceuse, Op. 16

Composed by Gabriel Fauré and performed by Théotime Langlois de Swarte & Tanguy de Williencourt