

THE REDISCOVERY

4 Direct Questions to Explore Our True Natures

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Introduction

Throughout the ages there have been beings that have rediscovered the Source of who they really are. This rediscovery has been known by many names, such as Enlightenment, Self-Realization, God-Realization and Awakening, to name but a few. All these beings have agreed that they found a true freedom from fear, sorrow, illusions and attachment to the world, thus bringing them real lasting peace, joy and freedom. But they also contend that all of these were only an inherent result of what they found within and all around them. What all these beings also agreed upon, is that what they found cannot be defined by name or form, and that ultimately, it is a complete mystery beyond words. A beautiful mystery, but one that can only be tasted directly by each being themselves.

It is my wish that through this process of questions that is called ‘**The Rediscovery**’ that each being will also stumble upon this beautifully rare mystery, and reap the immense benefits it bestows.

As with the journey to achieve any goal, there is a natural evolutionary process that takes place. Part of this process is an experimental phase whereby all the different avenues are being explored and tested, to be able to come to a particular refinement and efficiency of methods, that will bring about the achievement of that particular goal. Spirituality (*rediscovering who you really are*) is certainly no different.

When we look back into the history of spirituality there have been many traditions, and these traditions have had many methodologies, and surrounding these methodologies have come many superstitions, dogmas and beliefs. Whilst there is nothing right or wrong with this, it can be confusing and time consuming for a spiritual seeker to work through. Potentially taking them a lifetime to learn and perfect a method, often of which rarely brings them to the Source of their true natures (*Self-Realization*). Other times, a method, like a meditation, mantra or breath work, can, without a direct line of inquiry and guidance, leave a being without a true vision of what they really are, thus keeping them within a boundary vision of their limited selves.

From this boundary vision comes distress, woe and limitation of all kinds. This is actually unnatural, because, what we really are in relation to the universe, is natural. Thus a being should not have to wait lifetimes to reacquaint themselves with what they already are.

THE REDISCOVERY, with its four main questions, has the purpose of cutting through the ‘long routes’ of the spiritual path, and instead laying the foundation for a fast-track towards the ultimate goal of every spiritual seeker – Returning To The Source Of Who They Really Are. The reason why it is called ‘**The Rediscovery**’ is because it is for every being, themselves, to have that discovery. No one can truly tell you what you are or what reality is, it is a complete **mystery**, a mystery that only you can directly experience and find the answer to.

A question is a very powerful tool. A question is a quest, that is where the word comes from. Question is made up of the word **quest**, which is an intention to find something, and the suffix **ion** in the word question means ‘action’. So a ‘question’ is literally an ‘active quest’ to find the truth about whatever the nature of our question is. So in a sense we can say that the quality of our questions determines our journey, what we will find, and even the richness of our life experience as a result.

If someone's questions are, rightly or wrongly, of a more mundane affair, for instance about how much money they can make or if they will get married, and they are persistent with that line of questioning (*journey to find an answer to that*), then that is what they will eventually end up discovering more about. But if their questions are of a more deeply profound nature, such as, what is the true nature of reality and the universe, or what is Enlightenment and my True Self, then with persistence they will eventually discover those truths also.

In regards to spirituality and the source of our natures, the answer we will find through these questions will not ultimately be of a conceptual or intellectual nature, instead it will be **experiential**. After all, what good is a concept if it is not an experiential shift occurring within us? For instance, it is one thing to have a concept of what it means to be happy, but entirely another to actually BE happy, and this is the crux of the problem most people experience. Most people are already full of many concepts and answers about themselves and life, and because of this all they would be doing is exchanging one concept for another concept. Neither which ultimately gets them closer to the Source of their natures.

From the moment people were born, and all through adult life, they have been bombarded and conditioned with informational answers and concepts of the world, of which most people take on, even if only at a subconscious level. These 'answers' form a paradigm of how they see themselves and the world, and so it is hard to have a natural curiosity and urge to question reality, if consciously or subconsciously they believe they already have all of the answers.

For example: someone may once have believed Santa Claus to be real (sorry to break it to you if you still do!), but as our understanding evolved, this view of the world, of course, dissolved. How things looked to you when you believed him to be real, vs how they looked afterwards, was quite different. But if that viewpoint was not shaken off, it would taint any new information or experiences that you received. The same is true for any belief, as a belief literally has the power to shape our experience of the world. As soon as a belief is seen to be false, our experience can drastically SHIFT.

All great beings throughout history, including the enlightened beings, have had a natural curiosity of questions that arose out of the humble beginnings of knowing that they know very little. What this points to, is that before we can be successful on any journey of rediscovery, it is best that we at least suspend the conceptual answers that we might have already taken on from the past, maybe from reading other books or listening to other teachers, or even from our own defined experiences of the past, otherwise, we might find that they become the very blocks that limit us from discovering something completely fresh, brand new and revolutionary about ourselves and the world.

If we can approach these questions with the balance of being open, critical and curious, as well as relaxing any preconceived notions, then this will serve us greatly in our exploration. It would be well worth us bearing this in mind when working with this method.

It is also advised to work with these questions one at a time, starting from the first to the last, and being as thorough as possible in your investigation. This is because the questions increase in depth, like peeling away the layers of an onion, to the core of who we really are and what reality is. This is not about any right or wrong answers, and there are no trick questions, its instead about the exploration itself, that's what's important. Because the act of asking these questions is exactly what enables us to do the self inquiry work that will ultimately lead us to fresh and evermore deepening realizations each time we ask them. It is the process of rediscovery itself that does all of the transformative work, we just have to be willing.

Before working with these questions, it can be important for us to be as relaxed and clear as possible. So I've included this special meditation that can be done before all, or any part of the discovery.

I WATCH THE MIND I WATCH THE BODY MEDITATION

Instruction

Find a quiet place where you will likely be undisturbed.

Sit in an upright position with your back straight and head facing forward, looking at a 45 degree angle from the floor, and choose a comfortable upright position to sit. Such as the cross-legged sitting position on a cushion, or sit in a chair with your feet planted firmly on the ground and your knees bent at a 90 degree angle.

You can either place your hands one palm on top of the other on your lap, with thumb tips touching, or you can turn the palms of your hands upwards and place them on your knees. Whatever feels most comfortable for you.

Now soften your gaze and look towards the tip of your nose, and gently close your eyes, so that you are gazing towards the blackness of your eye lids, where the tip of the nose would otherwise have been seen.

Now settle into the position, and when you are ready, take three medium length breaths in through the nose and out through the nose...

Once you have slowly inhaled and exhaled three times, repeat this internal silent mantra with the breath...

*Say silently, 'I watch the mind' on the inhale...
And, 'I watch the body' on the exhale...*

*As you breathe in gently, say to yourself 'I watch the mind'
As you breathe out gently, say to yourself 'I watch the body'*

As you say the mantra, allow it to gently direct your attention towards both the body and mind as you breathe. Repeat each mantra at the same time as the inhalation and exhalation of the breath...

If you find that you have become distracted by external noise, then just simply become aware and acknowledge whatever the distraction was and gently return to the inhaling and exhaling of the breath with each internal silent mantra...

If you find that you're becoming lost in thinking or distracted by bodily sensations, then simply acknowledging what you've become lost in...Let It Go...and return attention back to the breath and mantra, whilst watching the body and mind activity once again.

Each time you become unaware (lost in thoughts), make a conscious note of it...but do not judge yourself or become angry. Simply return to the mantra and breath.

Allow the practice to turn you into a 'silent watcher' of the body and mind's activities, watching and noticing the different movements of thoughts and the different sensations that arise in the body, watching them impartially without judgement.

Continue with this practice for anywhere between 15 to 30 minutes before beginning ‘The Discovery’ questions below. It is good for us to remember, that with all methods, patience and persistence is the key to their success.

QUESTION 1 – WHEN AM I?

So the first question is ‘**When Am I?**’

You may never have asked this question before, and it may seem a strange question to ask, but it is a key question that can return you, consciously, to where you really are, by breaking the hypnotic spell of feeling lost and entangled in the busy world of your thoughts.

Within most people’s experience, they are anywhere but where they truly are, consciously. Meaning that they are often in an unconscious-hazy-state, inside their minds, which has become enmeshed with the experiences that have been, or of the experiences that may come. In other words, there is a constant oscillation between imaginations of things that may come in the future and memories of things that have been in the past, in what we call time.

The ‘**When Am I?**’ question thus opens up a beautiful world of other questions that spur us on to explore. For example: **What is the nature of time itself?**

Is it real or illusionary? Is it relative or absolute? Is it linear or spherical?

Intellectually we may have an answer that we think we know, or have heard, or even experienced in the past, but have we tested it for ourselves? Do we continue to test it? And what is our actual experience of it now? Because if our experience hasn’t changed, then what good is a concept?

Another question is ‘**What is the nature of mind and thought?**’

Is there a relationship between your thinking and time? Is your thinking often a conscious or unconscious process? Do you live mostly in your thoughts or in the bare reality before you?

We can even flip the question around and bring in a logical process of elimination, by asking ‘**When Am I Not?**’. This really gets us thinking more deeply, by looking at all the different angles and ways we seem to lose the sense of **when we are**.

For instance: Is when we are ‘last week’, or is it ‘tomorrow’? Is it in the next moment or in the previous one? Can you find the line and distinction between **when you are** and **when you are not**?

HOW TO WORK WITH QUESTION 1

The best way for us to work with this question is to use it throughout the day, as well as to set aside some quiet time to meditate upon it. The purpose of this question is to both explore, remind and experience what it is guiding us towards. Think of the question as a signpost. Just as any signpost,

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1.C) By contemplating this question, have any new realizations or confirmations come about for you? Please note your experiences below.

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1.D) Using words to best describe, ultimately, what do you feel the question is pointing you to, or away from? Please note your experiences below.

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QUESTION 2 – WHAT IS HERE REALLY?

The second question is **“What Is Here Really?”**

This question is asking us to take a look at what is “really” here in this moment. Our minds, through previous information of the past, may think it knows what is “really” here, but does it really? Or does it just see the echo’s and colourings of its own minds conditioning? The question is asking us to look again, in a fresh and new way, as if seeing things for the very first time. Our minds may see many different objects in this moment, and have labels for them, and a whole conceptual story and description attached to them, but is there a reality underneath this?

Are these objects really separate, or do they just feel separate?

This also goes for your own body and mind, what are they really?

This questions is an opportunity to reconnect with life “as it is”, the isness of phenomena in the moment, and the absence of phenomena which we might call the “space” of the moment.

HOW TO WORK WITH QUESTION 2

The key here with this question is to look through your “direct experience” of what is here, rather than through the perceptual lenses of the past, in the mind and feelings. Approach the question like a stranger to a new unseen world, or like an innocent child. Investigate the nature of this moment, and its contents, from a place of wonderment. Suspend the certainty of “knowing”, and instead relax into the place of “not-knowing”, which settles you into a “direct experience” of the here and now.

2. What Is Here Really? *Please note your experiences below.*

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2.A) In the instant of this moment, what is the content of this moment? (For example: Objects, colours, people, your body ect. Everything that is in your “present experience”). *Please note your experiences below.*

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2.B) In your honest direct-experience of the contents of this moment, are the contents seen as separate, related or as one? (For example: do the contents/objects appear to you as interdependent or as dependant of one another, or unexplainable?)

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2.C) As you are looking from your direct-experience in this moment, and are seeing the contents of here, do you experience a “knowing” of things, or and “unknowing” of things, or neither? (For example: is your direct-experience of what is here different than it has been previously?).

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2.D) Does this question allow you to see the “space/spaces” of the moment, in between the content/objects? If so, how do the “space/spaces” differ in your experience from the contents/objects? (Right your experiences below).

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2.E) Does this moment see and feel different when you are not thinking about it or past or future, than if you are thinking about it, and/or past and future? (For example: Do thing appear different in this moment when you are not thinking about them?).

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2.F) When you ask this question, how do you feel, and/or, does it change your state of consciousness in any way? Please note your experiences below.

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2.G) By contemplating this question, have any new realizations or confirmations come about for you? Please note your experiences below.

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2.H) Using words to best describe, ultimately, what do you feel the question is pointing you to, or away from? Please note your experiences below.

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QUESTION 3 – WHO AM I NOT?

The third question is ‘**Who Am I Not?**’

In the Rediscovery process we are essentially seeking our True-Nature, which is the Source of who we are, but in order to do this, the best way is to first discover what we are not, through a process of elimination, because once we can clearly establish ‘**who we are not**’, then whatever remains, must be **who we are**. This gives us the ability to use the readily available discernment of our intellect, to dissect what is original to who we are, and what is not. This makes the process ‘clear-cut’ rather than relying on feelings or unclear ideas in our minds which can often be inaccurate to the absolute truth. For instance, there are nearly 8 billion people on this planet, and all of them will have either a slightly, or vastly, different perception of thoughts and feelings, that differs to others. But yet, underneath those perceptions, there is an absolute reality at the Source of Existence. The aim of this investigation is to look as clearly and honestly as possible, to discern between the illusion and truth of who we are at the Source.

HOW TO WORK WITH QUESTION 3

So before we work with this particular question, it is going to be important to ask another key question in relation to the nature of reality. The question is this: ‘**Are the contents of the world, including objects, possessions and even your body-mind, constant, or are they transient?**’ *(Transient meaning that they eventually come & go in their current form. For instance: An apple that decomposes into the soil, a house that eventually crumbles or is demolished to the ground, or a pet we possess that will eventually pass).*

In other words, are the nature of these things in the world permanent or impermanent? Will they last forever in their current form or not?

How many things can you think of that are subject to this kind of change? You can write any of your reflections and answers here:

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Please contemplate this yourself, as it is going to be important to bear this question in mind when asking this **Question 3**.

So the best way for us to work with **Question 3**, is to set aside some quiet time where you will be undisturbed. You can either use a piece of paper to work with the **PDF** file or print it off instead.

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3.F) Am I my story? *(Linked to the self-image lives a mental story that most people tell themselves everyday. This story is about everything we have done and experienced in the past, as well as how we think about ourselves and others, and what we are intending to do in the future. It can include regrets, fears, insecurities, hopes and aspirations. Does the content of your story change or remain the same always? Where did this story come from, and was it there as a small child?) Please note your reflections below.*

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3.G) Am I my mind and thoughts? *(Everyone has a mental conversation playing in their heads that they often assume is themselves, but does this chatter, and its content of thoughts come and go? What is the mind and thought made of, and where does it's contents come from? Can it be quiet? Who is able to notice the chatter as its happening? Does your mind just switch off, and if it doesn't, and you are your mind, then why can't you just stop it at will? Please note below.*

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3.H) Can a thought be aware of itself? *(For instance: This would be like saying 'can a knife cut itself?'. If a thought cannot be aware of itself, then who or what can? And if a thought can be aware of itself, then how does a thought see itself? By what apparatus?) Please note below.*

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3.I) Who is aware of my mind and thoughts? (*Who bears witness to imagination, memory-pictures, colours, ideas, judgements, unpleasant thoughts and pleasant thoughts ect*) Please note below.

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3.J) Who would I be without my story and self-image? (*Without a repeating story in your mind, and without the need to uphold a particular self-image, who would you be without it? How would you experience yourself and the world? Is it peaceful or stressful without a story and self-image?*) Please note below.

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3.K) How much of the phenomena above is subject to change and loss? (*Objects, possessions, titles, roles, relationships, status, body, self-image, story and thoughts/mind?*) Please note below.

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QUESTION 4 – WHERE AM I LOCATED?

The forth and final question is ‘**Where Am I Located?**’

This question is asking us to find whereabouts in the body we may be located. It is often the case that we take for granted ‘where’ we are, and never look. Some people may have the sense that they are spread out all over the body, whilst others may feel that they are in the head or the heart. Others may feel they are not in the body at all and yet others that they are at a specific area. Once again, there isn’t necessarily a right or wrong answer, as its the exploration itself that truly counts. The reason for this is because its in the exploration itself that we inevitably dive to deeper and deeper truths within.

For many, they may rely on the second hand information of science, which tells us that our self-consciousness is a product of the brain, but actually, this has still not been proven as a fact. This uncertainty is known as ‘the hard problem of consciousness’. There is still great debate about where the seat of your consciousness truly is, and if there is a seat at all. It is fundamental to the very fabric of our reality and experience to know this, and yet it still remains a great mystery. Only the enlightened sages through much inner exploration claim to have rediscovered such truths, and the only thing that separates them from anyone else, is simply the willingness to explore, and having the right tools to explore with. These questions are such tools.

As with all of the questions, we will have to revisit them again and again to dive deeper each time. Many people report a “deepening” in a more refined state of experience each time they partake in self-inquiry. If we try to work these questions out with our minds, or skip through them quickly without deep contemplation, then we will struggle and find blocks in our path, and garner very little. But if we look, the same way we would look for a mystery item with hidden clues, then eventually we will be led to the very sight and experience of what we seek. It is often the case with these questions that something brand new is rediscovered each time.

HOW TO WORK WITH QUESTION 4

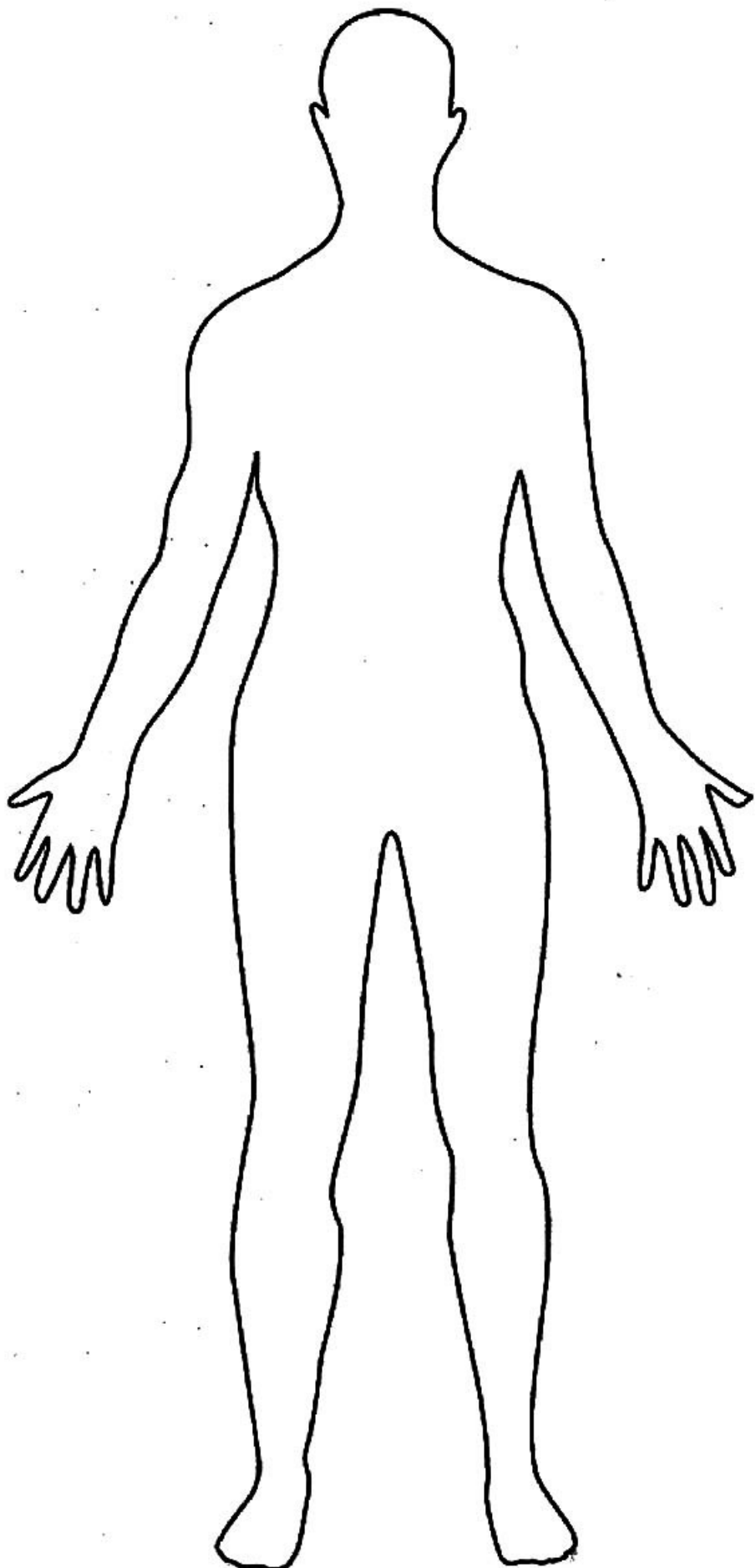
Find a comfortable quiet place and ask yourself the question ‘**Where Am I Located?**’

Take your time and scan around the whole body and see if you can find the very source of your essential nature. For instance, can you find a location where “you” seem to be experiencing the world from?

Is there a place in the body where all experiences seem to be reporting to?

Is there a centre point from where you view and experience the world?

You can use the image of the body below to mark down what areas, if any, feel like the source/sources of your consciousness.



Here are some additional questions to help you in your search:

4.A) As I notice a sensation, like pain, where am 'I' in relation to this sensation, and where am I aware of it from? Please note your thoughts and experiences below.

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4.B) Whilst noticing an emotion such as anger, confusion or fear, where is the consciousness that these emotions report to? Please note your experiences below.

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4.C) When thoughts are noticed passing through the mind, what sees these thoughts, and where are these thoughts being seen from? Please note your experiences below.

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4.D) Can I trace a thought back to its source, from where it arises? (When thoughts come and go in your mind, where is the source from which they arise, and where do they once again return, once they cease to be?) Please note your experiences below.

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4.E) Can I find from what position consciousness is looking from? *(Where is the source of your consciousness, that is aware of your experience, happening from?) Please note your experiences below.*

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4.F) Can I be conscious of consciousness itself? *(When conscious, is it possible to be aware of that consciousness?) Please note your experiences below.*

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AUTHORS CONCLUSION

Well done for making it this far.

In my experience, there is an infinite expansion that occurs through these questions, each time bringing more and more realizations, clarity, confirmation and most meaningfully...experiential shifts. Whilst you may eventually come to rediscover that the truth always remains the same, your experience, through these questions, will likely shift to accommodate the truth evermore deeply, and that's where the benefits it bestows are unlimited in nature. Have fun exploring.

If you would like further one to one guidance with this process, or to ask any questions, you can contact me at christopherjaismith@gmail.com, or visit the website at www.christopherjaismith.com

Thank you for your time. With love and respect.
Christopher Jai Smith