



March 2023 Graduate Program Lesson **Exploring Lessons 1 and 4 – The Self is all there is**

Introduction

In this month's Graduate Program study, we are going to be looking deeper at lessons 1 and 4 and combining their wisdom into a deeper revelation. Let's review what these lessons show us when fully assimilated:

Lesson 1 urges us to bring our attention to the Noumenon by whichever doorway we find most comfortable. When we bring our attention back to Noumenon/Self by whichever way we find easiest we will find ourselves less and less pulled into illusion. As we recognize what is real ever more clearly, we will find that even when we are pulled into the illusion that we are a separate "someone" it will be easier to come out of it.

Lesson 4 shows us that the Self and all that arises out of the Self are the same substance. In this deeper experiential understanding we will find stable peace that does not require any effort. Here, as the place before concepts, opposites and duality, we find that phenomena and the Noumenon are one. We experience the same peace whether we think we are looking at thoughts or the Silence of our being. All comparisons stop here.

How can we combine lesson 1 and 4 for greater benefit? If we look at what seems to distract us from our meditation it will be that attention goes to certain objects and away from the Noumenon itself. If we are listening to the Silence for example, we will find that at some point we are listening to thoughts or noticing some negative emotion or sensation happening in the body. Perhaps the suffering we experience when attention seems to go to a thought, emotion or sensation we are having (rather than being able to rest in the Noumenon) is due to something different than we may have thought. What if we are

suffering not from the wandering attention but rather from the idea that there is something else for attention to fixate upon other than the Silence? What if we are suffering from the idea of duality?

If we can allow attention to rest in the Silence (or whichever way you tune in to the Self) for as long as we can and then simply switch to a contemplative question when attention jumps to a phenomena we will not feel disturbed. We can use our meditation to allow attention to rest on the Silence until attention moves to an object and then switch to a contemplative question such as “what really is this thought?”

In this approach we will find it is like rowing a boat with two oars. The left oar is meditation and the right oar is contemplation or inquiry. If we use only one oar, we will simply go around in circles but if we use both of them, we can move forward. By doing this we will come to a deeper experiential understanding that there is no actual phenomena that exist independently of the Self. We will begin to see that there is nothing other than the Self no matter what we think attention is looking at.

Most importantly, we will feel the same deep peace whether attention is resting in the Stillness or looking directly at thoughts. We will make no attempt to force anything of our attention because we will know that what we are looking at is always the Self, yourself. Your attention then will reduce its wandering around and come to rest in the formless ground of Being more often because you will know there is only one thing to look at.

Exercises for this month:

I suggest doing these exercises together as a group and/or with your GP buddy/buddies. Discuss your doubts, challenges and insights with each other.

1-Continue your daily 20-minute meditations as in lesson 1 as consistently as you can.

2-Notice what type of phenomena pull your attention away from the Self most often. This will most likely be thoughts and emotions.

3-Contemplate with the question “What really are thoughts/emotions/sensation?” or use any phenomena that come up regularly such a physical pain or discomfort as we learn in lesson four.

4-Notice that attention goes to the phenomenon less as you question what it really is and eventually will not move at all to it.