



## **November 2023 Graduate Program Lesson** **Exploring Lesson 4 – The Continuum of the Self**

### **Introduction**

Lesson four says that form and formless are One and the same. There are not two categories of “form” and “formless” and there is only One substance-less unbroken continuum. If we use the metaphor of a lake of water, we may be able to see more clearly that there are not really objects arising out of the Self. Nothing ever really emerged from the Self, no creation ever occurred, there is only the appearance of creation or the appearance of objects.

During winter, a lake of water may freeze over. And some parts of the lake are still liquid water, whilst some are solid ice. The mind would like to say these are different because one is liquid, clear and can change shape and the other is solid, static, and unchangeable. If we look with our five senses only, we will see what seems to be big differences between liquid and solid, but we must come to look with our real Self. Looking as the Self means to look at the essence of something. It is not really water or ice, it is the Self appearing to be two different things. It is one unbroken continuous body of water. The Self is like this too. It is all the Self, the whole universe is the Self but, in some places, it appears as vast, empty space and other places as objects, planets, trees and people.

To help us understand lesson four, we must be willing to think in different ways than most people. We must be willing to question assumptions that other people accept as true and never question. We will study these assumptions this month and begin to see what is really true.

## **Common assumptions**

1. Because one thing looks different to another thing, it actually IS different.
2. I can tell whether there is one thing or many things by using my senses and/or my mind.
3. Because we have different names for things, they are actually different to each other.
4. Because something appears to have manifested (become a form) it actually has manifested.
5. The appearance of something means it really exists separate to everything else.
6. I can use phenomena, objects, or things (such as thoughts, sense perception, experiences and emotions) to tell me important information about my real Self/Noumenon.

## **Actual facts**

1. We cannot be sure about anything based on only what appears to be.
2. My senses are limited to telling me what something appears to be and tell me nothing about the essence of the thing. (The senses are limited but not wrong!)
3. All names and labels point to the same One essence. They all mean the same nothing-ness.
4. Nothing is ever created, sustained, or destroyed because it is never independent of the Self. It is only the temporary shape the Self is making that is created. We can never make anything out of the Infinite Self. Objects are like slowed down, frozen glimpses or photos of the Self. No thing ever actually manifested; it is like the water in a mirage that seems to be there but really is not.
5. Just because something seems to be there does not mean it actually is.
6. All phenomena can not tell us anything about our real Self! There is nothing in the universe of forms that can help us to find out who or what we are, how we are doing in our awakening.

## **Exercises for this month:**

I suggest doing these exercises together as a group and/or with your GP buddy/buddies or in the GP Sanghas. Discuss your doubts, challenges, and insights with each other. The exercises this month are simply to discuss and ponder what you have read above.

1. Take some time to look at the assumptions above and corresponding facts. Notice how most human beings would agree with the assumptions and never even question them. You are now questioning them because you are ready to live as the indivisible Self. You never divided yourself into two, never became a separate being at all.
2. Spends some time noticing that you may still want to reference the presence or absence of thoughts, emotions, resistance, or problems (all of which are phenomenal) as evidence of where and what you are. You cannot find anything useful about you in phenomena! You cannot find anything useful about your progress in the world of phenomena! Watch yourself over the next few days and see that your mind is always trying to interpret what is going on in the mind, body, and world around you as evidence of “how I am doing in my awakening”. Recognise this can never give us evidence that we can rely upon!