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Evidence of Spirit (Part 3) *Picking Up the Trail*

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Only when you feel (to some degree) your Spirit's closeness to you, your Spirit's nearness to you, Its inseparability from you, may you then be guided by It. It's an indescribable feeling which is actually more than just a feeling; it may more aptly be defined as a *knowing*-feeling. And learning to identify *it* when it occurs enables you to filter out the illusions which normally obscure your indissoluble connection to that higher part of yourself, your Real nature, your Spirit. When you journey through your inner world having cognizance of this *knowing*-feeling, your steps begin to become ordered. Through this higher sense you begin to be able to discern what, within yourself, you need to tear down; and what, within yourself, you need to nurture in order to condition yourself to allow greater and greater degrees of Spiritual illumination to flow through you. And the greater the amount of Spiritual illumination flowing through you, the stronger do you sense this *knowing*-feeling; and the stronger your sense is of this *knowing*-feeling, the more ordered your steps will become.

This *knowing*-feeling is indeed always with you to a greater or lesser degree. However, conscious recognition of this *knowing*-feeling comes when you begin to feel some sense of "where" within yourself your Spirit resides. However "where," in this context, is not a place (as in location) but a state of being.

Your Spirit is that part of you which bears witness. It is that part of you which observes and considers your thoughts; observes and considers your emotions; observes and considers your body; observes and considers your experiences; observes and considers every event that is brought to your awareness, and every morsel of information you are exposed to. The Spirit is the witnesser. *You* (as Spirit) observe the fluctuations and changes going on around *You*, but *You* are not these fluctuations or changes. *You* are above change. *You* are above everything temporary or transitory. Life is change, but *You* (as Spirit) are more than life; *You* are beyond life. Life emanates from Spirit.

Life is the dance of change and transformation driven by the insatiable inner urge or desire *of* the Spirit. It is the Creative Will of the Spirit always at work. Life is the perpetual cycle of birth, growth, decline, dissolution and rebirth which is ever at work; the circle of life (as it were). Life is everywhere. There is no such thing as death. Death is merely the destruction or dissolution of a form as that particular form; however, the essence (the Spirit) which permeated the form remains "unchanged in its inner aspect, notwithstanding the countless apparent changes to its objective forms." "As in the case of the human body after the soul passes out... (the Spirit is untouched,

unchanged by this transition and goes on to assume a new form; and even the body itself, after the soul has departed it...) is as much alive after death as during the life of the person, the activity of the parts being along the lines of dissolution instead of construction in that case.”ⁱ Look where you will, life is present everywhere. There is no place in the Universe devoid of life. Nothingness does not exist; everything IS and can never cease being - this is Spirit. Life is the kaleidoscope of forms assumed by the Spirit. The Spirit is the well from which every expression of life springs, and is the sole witness to all such expressions.

Stop now and take a moment to go within yourself and give your consideration to something. Pick any subject you want, the only criteria is that it not be an upsetting subject for you. Perhaps you’ll want to consider a nearby object, a peaceful memory, your breathing. Anything you want, just take a few moments to think about it, then come back.

You’ll see that as you consider your consideration, thoughts will emerge; possibly even emotions born out of those thoughts, and physical sensations born out of those emotions. But notice that you are in a position to observe all of these occurrences (your thoughts, your emotions and your physical sensations). You hold them apart from yourself as you give them your attention. It is comparable to looking in a mirror in that you cannot be both that which is reflected, as well as the reflection. You cannot be both the *Observer* and that which is *observed*. You cannot be both the *Considerer* and that which is *considered*. You cannot be both the *Witnesser* and that which is *witnessed*. Think about it, when you move your consideration onto something else and your thoughts change, and your feelings change, and the physical sensations you experience change – won’t you still be the same *You* then that you are now? Aren’t *You* the same *You* regardless of the particular thought that you give your attention to, regardless of the particular emotion you may be feeling at any moment, regardless of how your body changes. If *You* are the same *You* regardless of these variables, then *You* must exist independent of these variables; *You* must be above them. *You* must be and are above your thoughts, above your emotions, and above your physical sensations and physical body.

Henry Reed in his book *Edgar Cayce on Channeling the Higher Self* suggests a similar meditation / contemplation exercise in helping to facilitate Spirit recognition. I offer it here as well because oftentimes it can be helpful to express the same idea, in a different way. Sometimes this makes understanding easier. It is the *I AM Awareness Meditation* and the instructions are as follows:

“Pick a word or a simple image that you feel comfortable with having in mind. When you decide upon this *focus*, concentrate on it, and nothing else. If you pick the word “happy,” simply think of that word over and over again. If you picked the image of a balloon, simply picture that in your mind, keep looking at it, and nothing else.

After you’ve done this for a few minutes, you’ll realize that it’s not easy. Other thoughts and pictures come to you. Your mind distracts easily. That’s okay, keep trying. Whenever you find yourself thinking of something else, simply return your attention to your focus...

Now reflect upon what happened. You repeated (or looked at) your focus in your mind. From time to time you would be aware of other thoughts and images. They seemed to spring from a mind of their own, regardless of your desire to keep focused. You'd return your attention to your focus and the renegade thought would pull you away again. It was almost like a tug of war...

You were aware of your efforts to keep focused, the persistence of the stray thoughts, and the frustration you felt. You may have also noticed the mental commentary about the process that ran through your mind.

Now that you reflect upon those moments, realize that you were aware of all of it as it happened. Note, then, that somewhere in the back of your mind there was a witness. It was a silent witness. It simply observed. Although your inability to observe may have frustrated you, the witness experienced no such emotion; it simply observed everything. It took no sides in the struggle, made no commentary; it simply was aware.

Does that awareness seem somehow familiar? Isn't it the same awareness that's always with you in the background...? We usually don't pay much attention to its presence in the background. We're busy with our experiences, doing this and doing that. Our sense of 'I', of who we are, is created from our experiences of thinking and doing. Yet it's really only a little *i* compared to the silent *I AM* in the background. In fact this silent witness is often called the awareness of the *I AM*, or the *I AM awareness*. It's the first level of consciousness of the higher self. It's the doorway to experience the truth of the biblical statement, 'Be still and know, I am, God.'" ⁱⁱ

Your Spirit is that steady presence behind all of the changes going on around you; your thoughts (which are always evolving or moving from one subject to another), your emotions (which perpetually fluctuate), and your body (which is constantly changing). At the centre of all these fluxes is *You* witnessing it all play out. Therefore *You* are *not* your body, *You* are *not* your mind, *You* are something more. And that something more is what we call Spirit.

Do you not feel the truth of this, that you are the same *You* today that *You* were at six years old? Your body has grown. You've experienced a myriad of emotions over the years. Many thoughts, preferences and desires have passed through your mind since you were a child. Your understanding is more mature (one would hope); you are wiser. But in spite of all this shifting *You* are fundamentally the same *You* now that you were then. To feel this truth, is to feel and connect to your Spirit. To feel this truth acutely is to know that *You* are an eternal being, to know that *You* are invulnerable to any *real* (as in actual, lasting or permanent) harm. In actuality, *You* are untouchable.

If your Spirit were something incidental to your body or to your mind, then your Spirit would be subject to the same variability which is inherent to both the body and the mind. But your Spirit is not subject to such instability. Your Spirit is that constant factor which bears witness to these variables. Your thoughts, your emotions and your body are all instruments, or better still - appendages - of your Spirit. To confuse your Real nature

with that of an appendage would be like declaring, “I am my arm,” or “I am my pinky toe.” And just as it is impossible to command authority over your body from the location of your arm or the location of your pinky toe; it is impossible to command any Real authority over your life from anyplace other than that of your Spirit. The Spirit is the source of your freewill.

Reflect on this:

“Try to set aside (your Spirit) for consideration! You may try from now until the passing away of infinities of infinities, and you will never be able to set aside (your Spirit) for consideration. You may think you can, but a little reflection will show you that you are merely setting aside some of your mental qualities or faculties. And in this process what is (your Spirit) doing? Simply setting aside and considering things. Can you not see that (your Spirit) cannot be both the considerer and the thing considered – the examiner and the thing examined? Can the sun shine upon itself by its own light? You may consider the (Spirit) of another person, but it is *your* (Spirit) that is considering. But you cannot, as a (Spirit) stand aside and see yourself as a (Spirit). Then what evidence have we that there is a (Spirit) to us? This: that you are always conscious of being the considerer and examiner, instead of the considered and examined thing – and then, you have the evidence of your own consciousness. And what report does this consciousness give to us? Simply this, and nothing more: ‘I Am.’...”

And so in the final analysis, you will find that there is something that refuses to be set aside and examined by the (Spirit). And that something is the (Spirit) itself...

If you were able to set aside the (Spirit) for consideration, who would be the one to consider it? Who could consider except the (Spirit) itself, and if it be *here*, how could it be *there*?”ⁱⁱⁱ

Oftentimes we get so wrapped up in our thoughts, in our inner musings, in the emotions we feel, in the physical sensations we experience that we effectively entangle ourselves in these manifestations of the Spirit and lose sight of who we truly are. We lose ourselves in the unrest intrinsic of these ever-changing manifestations. And the longer we stay wrapped up in our thoughts, emotions or physical sensations, the more disoriented we become. We confuse ourselves with the personality we express which is by no means our Real nature because the personality is variable. It’s the ultimate identity crisis. When so much of our time is spent entangled in our thoughts, in our emotions, in our physical sensations, we lose sight of our eternal nature, of our invulnerability, of our indestructibility, of our magnificent power, of that divine spark at the centre of who we are. Feelings of powerlessness, fear, unworthiness and other such negative emotions, are all symptoms of a soul suffering from an identity crisis (which is pretty much most of the world’s population).

If you make a commitment to be more mindful of your life experience you will notice that your moments of clarity coincide precisely with those moments in which you were able to step back within yourself and bear witness the turbulence which surrounds you; in which you were able to center your conscious wholly within the present moment.

Whether you're stepping back is an instinctive impulse or a deliberate decision doesn't matter. Moments of clarity come when you are *not* allowing yourself to be carried away with your thoughts, emotions or physical sensations. And moments of clarity come when you embrace a non-judgmental witness perspective, when you center yourself in your Spirit. It's like centering yourself within the eye of storm.

Your Spirit is the peace which resides at the core of all unrest, it is the unmoved mover. It is that part of you which is Real and thus untouchable, constant, eternal and unchangeable for it is above the ebbs and flows intrinsic of what we call life. The evidence of these inherent qualities of the Spirit is made self evident through deliberate inner reflection and consideration. But before we move on to some of those considerations, it needs to be noted that recognizing that witnesser within you is only the first step in learning to ground yourself in your Spirit. Beyond simple recognition there is *knowing*. Simple recognition is somewhat cold and impersonal. It's difficult to stay connected to a perspective which merely stands by and watches. Standing apart from one's thoughts, emotions, experiences, physical sensations, etc. is all well and good for a few moments, but sooner or later we have to get on with the business of living. And living involves movement and action, and "getting our hands dirty" (so to speak). This is where *knowing* your Spirit helps you stay centered in It even when you're not holding the perspective of the staunch observer. To *know* your Spirit is to be so in tuned with who you are that you are guided by your inner light at all times, regardless of the circumstance you're in or the perspective you are holding. Because to be sure, embracing your Spirituality does not mean that you then become uninvolved in life. It simply means that you look at and approach life with the understanding of what is Real and what is unreal, what is lasting and what is transitory, what will pass and what will remain.

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ⁱ Yogi Ramacharaka, Gnani Yoga. Chicago, IL: Yogi Publication Society

ⁱⁱ Reed, Henry. *Edgar Cayce on Channeling the Higher Self*. New York, NY: Warner Books; 1989

ⁱⁱⁱ Yogi Ramacharaka. *RajaYoga*. Chicago, IL: Yogi Publication Society; 1906