

Realization Part 1: Consciousness Awakening

Leading up to the stage of Realization, in which the recognition of one's Conscious nature as one's Self becomes stable and permanent (i.e., real), aspirants often experience oscillations between what feels like an expanded or illumined state of awareness and their normal, mundane human perspective. While in the former, they may feel as if they have shifted into a more detached or aloof witnessing of their lives, in which there is some buffering from the normal vicissitudes of day-to-day life combined with a sense of the divine perfection of life as it is. Then they shift back into a more ordinary human framework, with all the inherent limits and problems coming back to the foreground of their awareness along with a sense of loss and longing for a return of the cosmic perspective. This is a transition phase which allows the recognition of Consciousness to become well-established while also permitting the neural pathways to gradually adapt to the changes that are occurring in the awakening process.

An important distinction to make here is that different people will experience their Conscious nature differently according to their inherent tendencies and natural resonance. The three primary aspects or qualities of Consciousness (or the Absolute, or I AM) that humans can distinguish and awaken to are Awareness, Being, and Heart. While all three aspects are equally valid and a recognition of any one of them can bring about a profound shift, the subjective experience of awakening via the different aspects will differ greatly. This can lead to some confusion or even a failure to recognize someone as truly realized if they have awakened through a different aspect of Consciousness.

The following are the three primary aspects of Consciousness as humanly experienced. Most people awaken using one of these aspects as their primary avenue, though it is quite possible, even desirable, to eventually awaken to all three:

Awareness or Presence: Awareness is where Consciousness touches the personal through the avenue of the personal mind (small “c” consciousness) and its thoughts. Awareness, which is most easily noticed in the center of the head, makes the activity of the mind possible. Sometimes called the Witness, Awareness is without boundary, form, or content, and is continually registering everything which is arising as thoughts, feelings, and sensations in the field of perception, memory, and fantasy. Attention is one of its attributes, as is intelligence, and its primary quality is light—the light of clarity that permits anything to be experienced or known. Normally our attention is completely focused on objects, ideas, and things, so that is all we notice; however, it is possible for our attention to soften or relax, thus allowing Awareness to become self-evident and the sense of Presence to come awake. Awareness is accessed through meditation, active noticing, or self-inquiry, and is generally the easiest aspect to awaken to.

Being: Being is where Consciousness touches the personal through the avenue of the body and its felt sense of aliveness or existence. Being, which is most easily noticed in the belly, is naturally more impersonal in nature—as the life-current it is the same for all beings, and is also without boundary, form, or content. It provides our sense of existence in space-time, and its attributes include instinctual knowing, the sense of “now,” stillness and peace, and the recognition of being non-separate from all of life and form which leads to deep trust in Being. Its primary quality is the feeling of life itself as an endless field or

ground that supports or gives rise to an infinite array of forms. Being is accessed passively, through resting, surrendering, or abiding in the deep Ground of Being. At its deepest, through the mechanism of surrender and grace, the experience of Being gives way to dissolving into Source itself (sometimes called the Absolute): our original home of bottomless peace.

Heart: Heart-essence is where Consciousness, as the Divine, the Mother, the Goddess, or the Beloved, touches the personal through the avenue of emotions and subtle feelings. Heart-essence, which is most easily noticed in the area of the physical heart, is multi-dimensional and its awakening may involve many steps to help it heal from the wounds it has sustained as a highly sensitive center of feeling. Its attributes include intuition, radiance, warmth, tenderness, gratitude, and compassion, and its primary qualities are unconditional love and grace. Heart can be accessed energetically through giving it attention, and through prayer and invocations that express the feeling of deep longing for greater connection with one's Divine source.