

## Introduction

When we talk about accessing the Divine, it's important to first define what we mean by the Divine. By Divine, I mean everything. So, we can call one aspect of this spirit or Source, but I also want to include the world, that is, not only the Creator but also the Creation. And not only the good things in the world, but the entirety of the world: things that we agree with, don't agree with, and things that we like and don't like. Everything.

When I speak of the unmanifest I mean that which we don't see with our normal senses, like spirit and Source. And then, the manifest is everything else: what we can see, feel, taste, and touch in this world; the entirety of our thoughts and emotions, our physical bodies, the outside world, other people, politicians, other countries and religions. Everything.

It's all One.

We can see ourselves as part of the unity, rather than trying to divide our existence into what we agree with and what we don't. In other words, our position relative to the entirety of the universe. When we allow ourselves to see everything, both the manifest and unmanifest, as one coherent whole, we can begin noticing how this wholeness shows up here, in this apparent separate body-mind and individuality. The spiritual journey is largely about coming into a sense of recognition of this wholeness.

Separation is apparent. This body looks different from that body, my situation looks different from someone else's situation, this country looks different from that country, and this religion looks different from that one. Separation, differences, individuality. The spectrum of duality is all around us – day and night, pleasant and unpleasant, hot and cold, young and old, existence and nonexistence. Duality is an inherent element of this life. And yet, there is an underlying wholeness that's possible to recognize in our own direct experience and not as a philosophy. None of this is about philosophy or having the right kind of concept or dogma, or the right theory about what we hope is true or what might be true. It's really about our own direct investigation about what is actually true.

What is this Life really about?

If we consider this question deeply, it is possible to begin to recognize the inherent wholeness of the entirety of this creation.

In defining the Divine, I'm not separating Life into the material worldliness and the Divine; the "spiritual" and the mundane. I'm saying that the entirety of Life is a Divine creation. Creation implies a Creator. Creation is an expression of the Creator. As such, it's not possible to separate the Creation from the Creator any more than it's possible to separate the dance from the dancer or the song from the singer. It's all One.

Finding depth in this Life is really about getting comfortable with the unmanifest. Referring to the unmanifest may sound vague or abstract, but it's really not. All of us experience the unmanifest daily. It is our simple, every day, ordinary/extraordinary awake consciousness. The same consciousness that allows you to notice the words that you're reading right now. This

consciousness is not a special, elevated consciousness. Rather, it's our everyday consciousness that recognizes what these body-minds are registering as sensations, thoughts and emotions. That consciousness.

Consciousness is not a thing. We can't step back and look at it. It's really of a different dimension than these bodies and our physical surroundings that we see and touch every day. Consciousness is our connection with Source. It's in the silence of consciousness that we begin to touch into the essence of Life itself.

Arising out of this simple consciousness are traits that are often considered spiritual virtues, such as love, compassion, generosity of spirit, and even simple kindness. We can attempt to practice these spiritual virtues, but when we come into a recognition of what we are, through a recognition of our own inherent consciousness that's already present, these attributes of consciousness become an inherent part of our life. Life is seen as an expression of these attributes. We see that the consciousness here in this body-mind is not a *personal* consciousness.

There is consciousness, but we discover that it is not *my* consciousness. It feels intimately impersonal. It is vastly larger than these body-minds.

Source is what enlivens these bodies; it is Source that is flowing through us. When we can see that in ourselves, we can see that Source is flowing through everyone else also. Through some, the transmission is less distorted, and others somewhat more distorted. But it is nonetheless the Divine operating. When we can see the same inherent consciousness present in others, the belief in "us-and-them" separation disappears.

If we can see through the challenges that we've had in our own life, such as overcoming our own emotional challenges or troublesome thought patterns, we can more easily notice and accept similar unskillful behavior when it arises in others. Not to be critical, but to be compassionate. We can have compassion for others in the same way we can have compassion for ourselves.

The journey home is to recognize that the entirety, both the manifest and unmanifest, is indeed One and that we are inseparable from that. We can recognize that we are not only connected to Source, but that Source is what is functioning through these body-minds – in all of us. That's the journey. Seeing the inherent wholeness of being allows us to look for what unifies us to ourselves and to others, to the world, and to Source. With that recognition comes freedom, compassion, love, and generosity of spirit.

When I talk about accessing the Divine, this is what I am talking about: accessing the wholeness of life, the manifest and unmanifest, the "spiritual" and the worldly. All are part of the same phenomena. All are part of the same existence. This is how Life is.