

THE ORIGINAL LIGHT

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In this writing of mine, I will focus primarily on the theme of Contemplation: I will therefore explain what it consists of, how it is possible to experience it, through what methods, what it leads to, or rather, what are, so to speak, its gifts.

All of this, of course, is intended above all as an invitation to seek out and voluntarily experiment with this particular state of consciousness, and I believe that all of us, both those who write and those who read me today, have probably experienced it at least once in their lives.

It is an experience that can occur under unusual or very normal circumstances, but I am convinced that every human being has experienced this ecstatic state at least once. Contrary to popular belief, it can become a voluntary and therefore repeatable experience. I chose this title, “The Original Light”, because the contemplative state involves coming into contact with a light, a light far superior to the mental, a light that can dazzle, and many spiritual seekers have testified that they were just physically dazzled by this light. I will therefore speak of an initiatory knowledge, reminding that initiatory knowledge is something different from ordinary knowledge.

Normal knowledge is such because it increases

knowledge, initiatory knowledge is such because it has the power to transform the consciousness that learns it and consequently practices it. I will obviously also refer to my personal experience, starting from the meditative techniques proposed by Roberto Assagioli,

We know that Assagioli speaks of three types of meditation: Reflective, Receptive, and Creative.

I have performed all three, but it might surprise you if I say that the one I practiced most and from which I feel I have received the greatest benefits was the first, reflective meditation. Reflective meditation is a concentration meditation.

Herman Keyserling, an author often referenced by Assagioli, makes a radical statement in this regard when he says: “...the power of concentration is the real propelling power of the whole of our psychic mechanism. Nothing heightens our capacity for performance as much as its increase; every success, no matter in what domain, can be traced back to the intelligent exploitation of this power. No obstacle can resist permanently the exceptional power of maximum concentration⁽¹⁾”. Therefore, Keyserling says, there is nothing that can oppose and resist our maximum concentration”.

Reflective meditation consists of choosing a topic, a phrase, a quality, and then exploring as deeply as possible what you have decided to meditate on. It involves meditating in a coordinated and persistent manner, developing all possible perspectives, seeking to discover everything you can understand and connect to the chosen topic, working steadily on this theme for a few minutes a day but over a fairly long period.

Initially, five to ten minutes of meditation a day will suffice, later increasing to fifteen to twenty minutes twice a day. The key is to maintain this focus on the same topic for a whole month or even two.

One of the reasons I am focusing on this practice is because I believe it allows for better results when we approach the other two types of meditation, and it's the exercise that truly helps us grow as far as psychic abilities are concerned. Reflective meditation offers many other benefits, most notably developing better concentration and exercising the will.

Indeed, keeping your mind on a single topic for a long time, as you might imagine, is a powerful exercise of intrapsychic willpower. I also find it particularly useful to choose a quality as a meditation theme, because meditating on a quality for many days will help make it more present in our personality. Furthermore, this type of meditation leads us to look at the chosen topic from different perspectives and points of view, thus accustoming us to a broader vision, rather than immediately accepting the most obvious point of view.

In this way, a more holistic perception of reality begins to be present in us, a perception that is typical of intuition, a function that is exercised particularly in the other type of meditation, the receptive one.

Finally, and perhaps this is the most useful thing, and the one I will dwell on, this exercise of deep reflection allows us to obtain and develop the so-called mental silence.

Through this discipline, one can reach a point of concentration that leads to a profound mental relaxation; this allows one to transition to a state of total absence of thought, thus allowing one to spontaneously enter

into silence. Silence is a great achievement, but I would like to draw your attention to one point in particular: it's not so much about achieving mental silence, but about discovering the natural, indeed essential, silence of our consciousness.

At this point, it is important to clarify the distinction between mind and consciousness. In everyday language, they are used almost synonymously, but in reality they are two very different things, as the experience of deep meditation reveals. Let us clarify that the practice of reflective meditation helps us distinguish them. Indeed, our mind functions a bit like a search engine, an organ that brings the files it stores to our consciousness, to our awareness. It does so based on our ongoing reflection, or as a consequence of a particular emotional situation, or even through simple automatic association, as happens when we are in a state of deep relaxation, extreme tiredness, or sleepiness. Consciousness, on the other hand, is something entirely different; it is our subjectivity, our essential reality, the witness who is experiencing our life.

At the beginning of the practice of reflective meditation, the mind, not being trained to dwell on the same subject for long, will tend to wander off to other topics.

Consciousness, which, remember, in its responsive, dynamic aspect, is will (consciousness and will are two sides of the same coin; to will, one must be conscious, and where there is consciousness, there is always intentionality), will bring it back to the chosen topic. In this way, we practically experience, within ourselves, the difference between mind and consciousness. This will allow us the important benefit, already mentioned, of becoming more in control of our mental matter and making us more capable of voluntarily entering into silence.

Silence, therefore, is not of the mind but of consciousness: the conscious Being lives in silence.

The files of our mind—that is, our thoughts, ideas, memories, and opinions—will continue to be present in

our mind as always, but consciousness, if it has learned to distinguish itself from the mind and no longer be distracted by it, will be able to enjoy its silence. This is because consciousness, which is ourselves, our true essence, is always silent in itself, while noise, instead, arises from the identification of our consciousness with our mind.

The mind will thus continue to have thoughts, but we, having discovered that we are consciousness, will avoid paying attention to them. This is why inner silence is a great achievement, because it means being able to finally identify with our true nature: pure, silent consciousness.

Pure consciousness is this: it is silence, it is emptiness, but it is a void that does exist, a nothingness that does exist, so much so that it is aware, indeed, it is awareness itself. But it belongs to a completely different level of existence than all that is contingent. What is contingent, that is, all manifest reality, is contained in this void, in this silence, in this consciousness. Matter is born from the void, is contained by it, and is reabsorbed into it; sound is born in silence and lives in it and then disappears, and the Universe draws meaning only from the existence of consciousness.

So, returning to the meditative experience, let's say that the experience of silence is a fundamental experience because, as we have just said, it allows consciousness to know itself as emptiness and silence and, thanks to this self-recognition, to become aware of itself, a different Reality that transcends phenomenal reality.

This state in which consciousness is simply self-aware, with no other content than itself, we could call it State of Pure Consciousness. Modern philosophy, based on reasoning alone, cannot reach the truth, because Being cannot be thought, and truth can never be reduced to a concept. But truth can be reached as a state of consciousness, as an experience, by coming into contact with being, becoming and discovering oneself as being, becoming it through one's own consciousness, in a state of fusion, what has been defined as the contemplative state.

In this "state", the light of thought is no longer present, but awareness remains, and indeed "enjoys" a greater light. Entering the state of pure consciousness is already approaching Being, it is already entering contemplation, that is, accessing the divine osmosis between the individual and the Whole.

In this condition there is no longer either thinker or thought, and yet, somehow, there is knowledge, even if it is a type of knowledge entirely different from what we are used to.

To contemplate is to enter into a total knowledge that doesn't know it knows. We perceive reality, but the reality in which we participate is indivisible, and therefore remains unknown and inconceivable to our mind. This is because mental knowledge is analytical, it requires distinction, it needs to distinguish, to put in foreground what it is in the process of knowing, separating it from everything else; so, to know something mentally means to differentiate it from everything around it.

In the contemplative state, however, there is no separation, and therefore there is no recognition of any particular content, but there is a knowledge that is not distinct from simple being, and which then, upon returning to the dimension of everyday life, in ordinary life, will make intuition easier.

This contemplative exercise results in a reversal of movement with respect to that of thought, with respect to ordinary knowledge. There is no effort; the effort of understanding disappears.

Instead, this current of greater light, of broader, objectless consciousness flows through us.

From all this a profound impetus to action will result. Surprisingly, contemplation drives action: an action that will draw its impetus not so much from thought or desire, but from the need to accompany, to go along with the flow that arises from the practice of meditation and that is transforming us; an action that will simply participate in and accompany us in a spontaneous, continuous approach to our essence. Therefore, it will be, above all, a transformation of ourselves by acting in

collaboration with the force that is transforming us, and, thanks to this, a transformation of life around us. I would like to add that the ineffable cannot be described, but words can hint at it, expressing it as an experience. This allows us to witness the possibility for our consciousness to access its own source, the light from which its own light originates, and to access the silence that preceded its word.

Wittgenstein said that whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent⁽²⁾.

But what cannot be spoken of can be experienced precisely as silence.

And this truth, which cannot be spoken of in normal conversational terms, I believe is precisely what most interests every human being.

The culmination of philosophical inquiry, as I have emphasized in this brief presentation, should be precisely mystical experience, contemplation, because only this can truly pose the ultimate questions Humankind is capable of asking, and provide the answers. Faith, too, is a consequence of this experience. Faith is not an intellectual fact, it is not a belief; faith is born from experience. It is tasting sugar that convinces us of the existence of sweetness.

Contemplation, finally, is a state that makes us aware that our being is not simply what is enclosed within our skin, for we are our body, but we are also consciousness and spirit; and if our body is individual and identifiable, our consciousness is individual but at the same time eludes other people's knowledge, and usually eludes even itself; and finally, the spirit, which is also part of our nature, does not belong to a single individual nor is it identifiable, but is universal.

Contemplation makes us, above all, freer, more ourselves, it frees us from the necessity of having to be, once we have discovered that we are, and that we are this emptiness, that we are this nothingness that actually is.

In this way, this practice can lead us to the highest level of authenticity. Contemplation, ultimately, is the

exercise of truly reaching oneself, and this is achieved precisely by forgetting oneself.

The Japanese mystic Dogen said that to know oneself is to forget oneself, and to forget one's self is to know all things⁽³⁾.

Through contemplation, we experience impersonality, we practice impersonality, we accustom ourselves to disidentifying from everything that concerns us personally, to finally discover that there is nothing that does not concern us. It allows us an increasingly direct contact with reality, increasingly blurring the distance between subject and object, and allowing us to fully access the present.

In turn, the habit of being in the present will allow us to live more fully, to the point of discovering that our identity coincides with life, that we are life itself, life living in itself.

Notes

1. Keyserling: Quotation from *Crescere* by Piero Ferrucci
2. Wittgenstein: From *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* by Ludwig Wittgenstein
3. Dōgen: From "Genjō kōan," the first chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō*, a Zen text by Dōgen