

What is Oneness?

Survey

1. Oneness – the mystical process of life itself.
2. Traps of oneness. The psychology of oneness. Sado-masochism. Nazi-structures and the initial mother-child-abuse.
3. Why it is so difficult to realize oneness today?

1. Oneness – the mystical process of life itself.

What is oneness?

Oneness is the natural state of being. It is the normal process of life itself; oneness is the adventure of normality.

Buddha under the bodhi-tree discovered that there is no separate self, no ego, no “mine”, no “yours”, no “his”, no “hers”. There is nothing but connectedness, nothing but oneness.

What is oneness? There is no question and nothing to answer.

Sogyal Rinpoche once said: The state of enlightenment is too close, and it is too apparent – so it is difficult to be discovered. Somebody who looks into a mirror thinks that’s him – but it is only a picture in the mirror what he or she sees.

What is oneness? The awareness of oneness has to do with how the world is perceived; and this is connected to how I refer to myself. Most people feel separated from themselves, this is the deepest pain we have to suffer, the *Dalai Lama* says.

“Oneness” as a reflection at a conference: as universal and basic this theme is, it is a very personal one.

I asked myself how I got the (crazy) idea to talk about this theme.

How can I talk about something which is beyond words?

From where do I get my knowledge? What kind of knowledge do I have?

Do I have to be enlightened to talk about oneness? Clearly to say: I am not.

But I talk.

I talk because I feel an attraction from it; and I think I’m not the only one here in this space who feels attraction to oneness.

Attraction leads us on our life-path, and opens our hearts to the divine; God can be perceived because he is attractive.

It is the attraction to oneness which encourages me to talk.

I always felt a keen desire to realize oneness as long as I'm able to remember my life; and I looked for many ways to satisfy it. "Oneness", as natural this state of beings is:

it is a task, and it is something to be realized. The perception of oneness can be realized by a sudden influx of divine grace, step by step or otherwise. However it might happen; oneness can only be understood by realizing it.

I think everybody here in this room will have personal experiences with oneness, some of you may think that you know what oneness is.

You may have experiences of oneness in very special moments of your life: the experience of oneness in love relationships, oneness with nature, and experiences of oneness in altered states of consciousness, in holotropic states; you may have had psychedelic experiences of oneness, mystical experiences in meditation or in your daily life.

These experiences can be an immense gift of life, and they can be life-changing. But there is also a problem:

Experiences are experiences; and they come and go.

As long as you focus on experience your world will be split in dualities.

I feel very grateful to the many experiences which my life granted to me; I feel grateful for experiences in ease and happiness, and I also feel grateful for the painful ones. They had been the most healing ones; they triggered the evolutionary energies.

All these experiences and insights nourished the fire of my soul, but they didn't satisfy the burning desire for oneness.

When I talk about oneness then I feel that burning; there is a pain in it. It is the suffering which is existential for the human condition.

Buddha said I am teaching only one thing. It is about suffering and how to overcome suffering.¹

I personally experienced oneness several times but I didn't realize "oneness" as the essence of my person.

The question arises if ever somebody personally realized oneness. My teacher *Mario Mantese* says that most people reach out for "ego-lightenment". But the divine light and an understanding are not personal qualities. The word is **en-lightenment**. What *Buddha*

¹ Source ...

realized under the Bodhi-tree was impersonal. **Oneness only can be realized if there is “no-one”**. The realization of oneness requires the sacrifice of the ego. There are a lot of misunderstandings about what that means.

I'll continue now reading a short part of Thich-Nhat-Hanh's understanding of the narrative around *Buddha's* awakening:

Siddhartha under the Bodhi-tree ... *“dived into a deep meditation and he gradually became aware that just in this moment numberless other beings have been present in his body. Organic and inorganic beings, minerals, mosses, different grasses, insects, animals and humans – his body, his being consisted of everything and everybody”* ...

“And he became aware that all beings suffer because they didn't know that they share a common basis. Ignorance causes a multitude of suffering ... greed, hatred, arrogance, doubt, jealousy and fear” ...

*“Understanding generates compassion and love ... to be able to love it is necessary to understand: Understanding is therefore the key for liberation.”*²

Prince Siddhartha understood that what he called his body was everything - countless beings, animals, plants, and minerals, beings, born and unborn. All those were playing and functioning under certain conditions. The whole world was discovered in Siddhartha's body, but **there is no substance, no identity which is Siddhartha**.

There is not an “ego“, not an independent “self“; there is no “I”. There is only **emptiness**, the void, *an-atta* in Pali words.

Emptiness does not mean nothingness, it does not imply that there is no world; it does not relate to a vacuum space or to a void as an ontological entity. The mere understanding is that there is no self, that there is nothing but the oneness of all beings, minerals, the natural forces, and a diversity of spirits. And all and everything are dependent to each-other, there is nothing but relatedness, inter-relatedness.

The word “*Buddha*” means “the awakened one”.

Siddhartha ended his dream of imagination and fantasy; he woke up to see the reality of everything, the reality of universal oneness. Oneness cannot be understood without the acknowledgement of emptiness. With that understanding emptiness becomes transparent for the light of love. Intense compassion for all beings emerged from deep insight, from deep understanding.

Now again a passage of *Thich Nhat Hanh's* description of the legend around *Buddha's* awakening:

“Colored flowers bloomed in the early morning sun at the grassy riverbank. The sunlight danced on the leaves and sparkled on the water. Siddhartha's pain had disappeared. All wonders of the life revealed themselves. Everything seemed unfamiliar and new. How

² Thich Nhat Hanh: *Alter Pfad weiße Wolken*. S. 115/116 Übersetzung I. J.

marvelous were the blue sky and the white clouds drifting past! He felt as if the universe just had been created newly.”³

Later on the Buddha was asked: Who are you? Are you a God, are you a priest, or are you a very special human?

He answered: **I am awakened.** In Magadhi (which is beside Pali another original language to be assumed the spoken language of the Buddha) “Buddha” means somebody who is awakened.

What is oneness?

As I listen to the intriguing story of Buddha’s awakening some people may feel a tendency to identify. And then they think they know it. But do they?

The present transpersonal community may have a tendency to conceptualize personal spiritual experiences or it presents spirituality quoting the old scriptures – and then gets out new concepts of the spiritual, new concepts of oneness.

Oneness cannot be conceptualized. Its understanding requires a sacrifice.

But at present, there are only a few ones who dare to kill the Buddha.

There is a Rinzai-Zen saying:

“If you meet Buddha on your path, kill him!

If you meet a spiritual teacher, kill him!

If you meet your father and your mother, kill your father and your mother.

If you kill all of them, you will attain the true enlightenment.”

A Korean Zen master⁴ used to ask his students questions like:

“What is love? What is consciousness? What will happen tomorrow? Where does your life come from? If his students answered:

I don’t know, the master said: Good. Stay with this spirit of not knowing. This is an open and clear spirit.”⁵

The medieval mystic Meister Eckhart:

“What is God? -... God is neither this nor that.

*A saint says: If somebody mentions he has recognized God – if he has recognized something then he recognized **something**, and so has not recognized God.”⁶*

³ Ebenda. 118

⁴ Seung Sahn (in Kornfield: The Wise Heart)

⁵ Ders. 525

What is God? What is oneness?

I don't know.

I think I don't really know.

But how can we know?

Jack Kornfield describes in his book *"The Wise Heart"* a shamanic Peyote ceremony in which he experienced oneness:

*"One night we sat at a big fire on a cliff over the Pacific; Don José had sung and drummed for hours. All the sudden the world woke up for life. I had taken Peyote and had thrown up, a frequent reaction. Then the limits between the "I" and the others started to dissolve. Tree spirits came and danced, the fire turned to vivid images, the world of humans and animals got unified. I listened and talked to deer, salmon, to owls, to the earthworm. They had been my brothers and sisters. At dawn, as the first daylight appeared I felt unfolding the holiness of the earth, and I saw the divine."*⁷

What is oneness?

People who had been privileged enough to have psychedelic experiences, experiences in holotropic states of consciousness⁸, may understand *Jack Kornfield's* description. And they also will know that words can only describe the minor part of it. It is similar what the mystic says: The essential lies beyond words.

I personally learned a lot from psychedelic experiences; they completely had changed my world view. But they didn't lead me to a place where "oneness" could be realized – inside the experience, yes. But there was an "outside", the time when I came down again to every-days' reality.

As definitely, as completely the ego may appear dissolved in experiences of altered states – it did not. The ego can be hidden in these experiences in many different and more or less subtle ways. One is the identification with the experience itself. This becomes apparent when somebody says: I had this or that experiences. It can be an experience of something, but never be oneness. There still is remaining an experience and the experienter.

Nevertheless, altered states experiences of oneness can be of inestimable value. They give us a mood, a hint what the divine is about. And they may open the path for a further understanding. Altered states experiences are like the finger pointing at the full moon.

⁶ Meister Eckhart: *Mystische Schriften* 118

⁷ Kornfield, Jack: *The Wise Heart*. (Das weise Herz, München 2008 (Arkana) p.436

⁸ This term is from Stan Grof, who is one of my dear teachers

Should we become courageous enough to understand that the brilliant cosmic light is not far away from us; we won't find it in the depths of the universe. Should we be brave enough to look for it straight in the middle of our hearts!

Then we'll understand that the realization of oneness requires a sacrifice. Most of you, dear audience, may think now – yes, I know that; it requires the sacrifice of the Ego.

But do you know what that is, the sacrifice of the Ego? Or are you identified with a certain concept of ego-loss, of ego-death?

2. Traps of oneness. The psychology of oneness.

Romantic ideal. Sado-masochism. Nazi-structures and the initial mother-child-abuse.

What is oneness?

I like romantic situations; and I'll encourage you (and also myself) not only to enjoy them; I encourage you to celebrate them: to light candles, to prepare and ornament the table for a wonderful meal, to charm your beloved one, and surprise him or her with the expressions of your open heart. And as you feel one you won't have a choice other than infinitely melting into it. For some hours or some moments, then you'll get a glimpse of the divine.

If you are fallen in love then you may be convinced to know what oneness is. Many of you will have experiences with romantic situations. For some people these moments may be the only ones who really made sense in their life.

In these moments the whole world seems to be magic. Your feelings, thoughts, worldviews, your unspoken wishes seem to be the same with your beloved one. And you include everything and everybody in your elevated mood. It seems to be a never ending heaven of oneness.

And you all will know what often happens when the honeymoon has been finished.

Andrew Cohen and Ken Wilber once said that the ideal of romantic in an intimate relationship is the main obstacle to realize love. The ideal of the romantic relationship is the main obstacle to realize oneness.⁹

And yet the romantic ideal nowadays seems to be predominant for most intimate relations. For many people this ideal rests covered in deep unconscious and currently

⁹ In: What is Enlightenment?

plays out when the life-situation is discovered as very normal. Often couples have difficulties during or after their marriage.

They blame each other for this or that “wrong” behavior; they are disappointed and sometimes (as a reaction to their disappointing lovers and as a revenge, they dream from an ideal partner, an ideal girl-friend with all desirable qualities, a terrific, a real man, unconditional acceptant like a mother and sexy like a super-hero. Some may look for a *twin-soul-partner* or a *dual-soul* while they live in disappointment and resignation with their real beloved ones.

All these people dream from oneness.

I think that main-stream couple therapy today mostly focuses on every-day-life’s-problems and a fair distribution of obligations and power whereas these never ending power-struggles in relationships are reactive patterns related to the deep open wound being not able to realize oneness, the natural state of their cosmic being.

There are two more or less unconscious patterns that try to realize the nature of oneness in relationships:

The first is what *Sigmund Freud* called the “**riddle of sado-masochism**”, the second is a very profound kind of abuse which until now isn’t broadly recognized: **The initial mother-child-incest.**¹⁰

The riddle of sado-masochism

There is a story about two women in a sado-masochistic relationship. I took it from a German book with the title: Short and painful.¹¹

There is Eva and Gabriela, two middle-aged women, both live in a shabby skyscraper in a suburb of Frankfurt.

Eva is an attractive woman; she had run a noble restaurant together with her husband. In the course of the economic crisis they had to close the restaurant, and the husband of Eva left her with the debts and disappeared with the remaining money.

Eva felt abandoned from the entire world; financially she was ruined, and there was only a black hole at the place of self-esteem.

It was at this place where the story between Eva and Gabriela started. Gabriela asked Eva in her apartment; she behaved charmingly.

After short time she tenderly kissed her sexually, she penetrated her; and simultaneously, she caused her incredible pains to her breasts; Gabriela overstimulated Eva’s sexuality, she made fiery her vulva, ignited her clitoris. And as Eva cried out to unload herself orgasmic, Gabriela dominated and inhibited her orgasm.

¹⁰ Eckstaedt Anta: Nationalsozialismus in der zweiten Generation.

¹¹ Singer, Kiara: Kurz und schmerzvoll. Norderstedt 2008. S. 19

Eva in this process didn't have any choice but to surrender, to give up control; and Eva not only agreed to it, she started to enjoy her painful submission. She gave away all will, all her wishing, and completely surrendered to Gabriela's sadistic desire. After they had sex Eva felt completely satisfied, and she deeply fell asleep. For her this process was a healing one; and she came to peace with all her wounds of her previous life.

It was Gabriela's desire to get absolute power on a woman who appeared to her for men sexually more attractive than herself. The power to have absolute control about this attractive woman freed her from her anxiety to be abandoned. She felt absolutely one with Eva, with herself, with the entire world. Also for Gabriela it was an intense healing process, healing from her deep female insufficiency.

Both women started a relationship; and they said that they had become inseparable and connected for ever. Their lack of self-esteem disappeared.

Both women had been able to resolve their economic problems and became well-functioning in daily life. Gabriela and Eva felt leading an extraordinary relationship; and they felt deep sense in their life – a sense of service and closeness to God. They felt like living in oneness.

This is the portrayal of an explicit sado-masochistic relationship which describes a sexual and relational pattern of a relatively small subcultural group. But there are billions of couples in the West living this pattern in a covert or more or less compromised form.

A frequent symptom for this pattern is the attempt to maintain symbiotic oneness in couples' relationship; in conflicts the dualities and differences in perception, emotions, thoughts are sacrificed. One person perceives, feels, thinks, acts from a place of power, different views of the other person and his or her needs to express have to be held back – it is **oneness by control from the one side, oneness by submission from the other one.**

The sado-masochistic pattern serves as a seal covering anxieties of separation, a lack of self-esteem, and death anxiety. The experience of oneness in a sado-maso-pattern is more or less unconsciously connected to arrogance, superiority and inferiority. The use of violence facilitates and maintains the experience of oneness again and again.

Statistically, couples of this pattern, almost never separate. They think that their relationship is beyond time, very exceptional, maybe spiritual. They experience "oneness", and try to satisfy their spiritual desire.

The experience of oneness can have many faces. Sado-masochism is one of it. Sometimes I hear stories from Westerners subjecting rigidly to very traditional rules of eastern spiritual teachers –

then sometimes I doubt if they are on a spiritual path or rather they fulfill their masochistic needs of oneness by overtaking power and oneness by submission.

Eva and Gabriela in their sado-masochistic relationship, Westerners subduing to rigid social rules in authoritarian Ashrams, and many others who live these patterns in a covert form, may feel very exceptional and spiritual; but what kind of spirituality is that?

The individual experience of “oneness” can be connected to the ego with its desire for manipulation and power, and, what is connected to that, with violence and totalitarianism.

The past German Nazi-personality

The experience of national oneness was the energy which empowered the Nazi society in Germany’s past history. The German Nazis had been very esoteric, their powers had been transpersonal. I think this only can explain the unfathomable energy of their actions.

“Oneness with God” for most Germans was an understandable talk; it gave hope alone for the soldiers in the trenches. A lieutenant of WW I writes:

“It appears to me as if much more calmness enters my life. It feels as if the war doesn’t touch me anymore although I am in the center of the fights. It feels like – it cannot be different how you say: Oneness with God became naturalness for me. ... It feels like an invisible hand would clear up all obstacles from my life-path and grit flower there”¹².

In the 1970th the left-oriented subculture in Germany engaged a hard public discussion on the social psychology of the past Nazi culture. The typical Nazi personality had been described as an authoritarian character: obedient, submissive; always in time etc.

At that time I often attacked my parents; I was accusing them arrogantly of this authoritarian character, I attacked them as cowards and submissive people.

Mostly then my mother answered very calm. She said that we didn’t understand what happened in Nazi-Germany. At that time in history, people in their normal life didn’t act very submissive. There was a huge engagement to support others; there was a lot of sociability, happiness and personal responsibility. These people often celebrated the power of pure nature, and esoteric views had been very popular. Then my mother said: We had been happy, we had been one – that’s all.

The initial mother-child-incest

I’m born 1943. It was the worst time of the Second World War. At that time my mother was 24-years young, my father was as a soldier and absent from home. My mother and I lived in Wroclaw, Poland, which at that time was Breslau and German. The Nazis had declared Breslau a fortress, and it was besieged by the allies against Nazi-Germany. Burning houses, fear, panic, air-raids, death-anxiety in shelters belonged to our normal daily life.

¹² Sünner, Rüdiger: Schwarze Sonne ... S. 20

My mother was my mother; I was a little boy, about one year old. And both of us had been exposed to the terror of war, to existential losses, to overwhelming anxiety. We did not have any normal mother-child-relationship. My mother did everything to protect me from death. Sometimes she protected me but forgot about herself, and I tried to help her by not moving my body, not making noises, not having to pee and to shit in the wrong moment. I had to forget about myself. She loved me, and I loved her, and we existentially needed each other.

We lived as one; and together we had been a shield against anxiety.

If it was possible to get some food for me, or something my mother believed it would make me happy, she immediately brought it, and I had to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the odd toys of a war country. In certain ways my mother tried to coddle me. I was her gift of life; my life and my happiness were what she longed for herself.

We had been one. Her desire to live was within me.

Then, sometimes, in clear and calm nights we went outside, and we looked at the dark blue sky; one of the first words my mother taught me had been “the moon”, “the stars”. My mother said these words to me, and I learned them; and both of us looked into the heaven with its twinkling stars. And we felt safe and protected by God.

We had been one in cosmic harmony.

There is some truth in it but also a lot of illusion.

The illusion is apparent: The noises of the war and its disaster came back very fast. Later on the post-war depression lasted very long. My mother felt separated from herself and she was narcissistically wounded her life-long; not even was she able to find peace and connectedness as she died.

Then shortly after her death a psychic woman, whom I didn't know before, spontaneously, without asking, told me that my mother had difficulties to find oneness after her death; but finally after around a month it happened in the subtle areas of Bardo.

My mother died very lonely, separated from herself and others. I had given a workshop at that time; and after finished somebody called me about her death.

An hour later I had a full mystical experience of universal oneness. There was a sense of holy joy, happiness and peace. – In a way it was my mother's last gift for me.

Digression about psychological transference and spiritual activation.

Ronald L. Mann¹³, I think he is a psychiatrist in the United States, introduces the process of **spiritual activation in relationships**, and he relates and distinguishes it from psychological **transference**.

¹³ Mann: Ronald: Activation: A Process of Spiritual Awakening, 2007

Spiritual activation means that a person can be “loaded” with strong transpersonal energies that are highly infectious. In a close relationship the other person can be set on fire by these energies which may activate a highly energetic process, a process towards spiritual awakening.

The emergence of high energies often triggers anxiety which is manifested more or less consciously. As a reaction the activated person may personalize the process and develop a strong attachment to the activator reaching out for sexual fulfillment which is seen more or less impersonal as *spiritual fulfillment, oneness with God*.

In each case if the activator personally fulfills the desire of the activated person or if he doesn't – both choices will include huge amounts of suffering leading us to what some traditions call “ego-death” which is the necessary prerequisite, the sacrifice we have to bring for Self-realization, for the realization of oneness.

Spiritual Activation as a process has to be distinguished from psychological transference because it is not related to a past key person, e.g. father or mother. The process of spiritual activation may prepare us for becoming awakened. Transference is a fantasy, an energetic pattern of past relations with key persons, which is imposed to, unconsciously projected to a present relationship. Transference blurs the perceptions of both, of oneself and of other persons. To facilitate truth transference has to be withdrawn. This is a highly effective psychological process; *Charles Tart* who is one of the fathers of Transpersonal Psychology, says that the discovery of transference is **the essential gift which Western psychology has to give to Eastern spirituality**.

Sometimes spiritual activation appears mixed with transference and vice versa. This for example is well known from sexual relationships between Gurus and their devotees. Mostly these relationships are a very difficult blend of sexual abuse and spiritual activation.

I don't want to get deeper in this now (even if it might be very interesting) and only remain with the statement how important it is to explore the field **where spirituality meets personality, where personal growth and spiritual emergence get connected**. The term of “spiritual activation” here appears to me of big importance, and in a similar way the connectedness and differentiation to transference.

A therapist of mine once said that my mother had abused me. And of course – if you look at it through the glasses of a personal oriented psychotherapy – there had been many hints and symptoms pointing to it.

For decades I was causing many severe dysfunctions in close relationships; there had been many separations with lots of suffering, there was an indescribable dependency from the yes or no of women, there was this unquenchable thirst for freedom, and at the

same time I never was, and I never got free. For a long time I mixed up my desire for spiritual liberation with the need to become independent from my mother.

My mother and I - we had been one, but our oneness sometimes seemed to suffocate my life.

Anita Eckstaedt¹⁴ is a German psychoanalyst who dealt with the psychological structures of the German second generation after Nazi-time. This is my generation. In her book *Nazism of the Second Generation* she coined the term “initial mother-child-incest”. This initial incest structure has to be seen as an archaic form of child abuse and a predecessor and facilitator of other kinds of sexual and emotional abuses.

Eckstaedt found out that a majority of war children and post-Nazi-time children in Germany are inflicted by this structure which very often coined their life.

Until now this theory is not very known in psychology and psychotherapy; but its reception appears to me worthwhile in Germany and somewhere else.

The relationship I had to my mother can be partly understood under this perspective. We did not have a normal mother-child-relationship.

I never was supported to get a strong and mature ego; and I think what keeps me alive today, connected to others and creative, is something different. Certainly it is not this mature ego what a psychological perspective tells me I should have.

I don't think that my mother had abused me. I think she loved me very much; otherwise I wouldn't have stayed alive during the extreme times of my early childhood. What also is true that I had to face the abuse energy in my own process to work on these transferences and I also had to face the nazi energy within me. Otherwise I wouldn't have had the opportunity to become authentic in my life.

But there is some other thing which is important to mention:

During war time, in the first years of my life, my mother taught me how precious life is, and how important it is to engage for life – even in worst periods when everything seems to speak against life. And this engagement for life refers to everyone and each being on this planet.

In the war during calm nights my mother and I went outside into the fresh air to look at the clear sky, to see the moon and the stars; then we melted into the infinite universe – we became one with each other and with everything, and there was only love.

When I think back at these moments as an adult I know that this was the beginning of my spiritual journey. My mother, as little she was able to mother me on a psychological level,

¹⁴ Eckstaedt Anita: Nationalsozialismus in der zweiten Generation. Psychoanalyse von Hörigkeitesverhältnissen.

was the activator for a strong spiritual desire; she ignited what Buddhists call the *bodhi chitta*.

Somebody said that the post Nazi generation in Germany and the post-war-generation in other parts of the West is a tied generation, a generation which is tied in splits, which is not free. I think to overcome these splits today it is necessary that spirituality and psychology merge together. Spiritual activation (as described above) and psychological transference have to be worked out hand in hand.

From my own story I know that liberation for us war-children (and probably for one or two post-war generations in Germany and other Western countries) is only possible by realizing one's *bodhi-chitta*. Simultaneously, this is of same importance, personal transferences have to be worked out; otherwise the realization of *bodhi-chitta* may lead to narcissistic structures and to an inflated ego.

Personally, the relationship between my mother and me was the field where psychology and spirituality met. The war and its all-embracing anxiety had been a tool of our spiritual activation. My mother was my spiritual activator during this time as she went outside with me during calm and clear nights, looking at the stars and the moon – and our thoughts and emotions at these moments had become transparent for unconditional and universal love.

There was no mother, no son. There was only one. And there was a promise within me: The promise that the divine light never would abandon me, throughout my whole life. And there was an unconditional task for me I had to fulfill:

To work on my psychological transferences – then freedom, oneness, love may happen simply so.

3. Why it is so difficult to realize oneness today?

In the West, the spiritual path is very different from the eastern traditional one.

In Eastern traditions in the first half of their lives people are used to fulfill their personal life responsibilities like schooling, fulfilling a good job and earning money, getting married, bringing up their children. If everything has been done, then they may decide to walk a spiritual path, meditate and find enlightenment.

There are lower and higher levels of consciousness; the higher levels have to be build upon the lower ones. *Ken Wilber* says that this happens in perspective of four quadrants in a holarchic mode.

Frequently the spiritual path in the West differs from that. Most people in the West see a synergy between personal and spiritual growth. They decide to do spiritual work even if they have many personal and relational problems. People in the West sometimes start

their spiritual journey while they are children, sometimes they use family crises, divorces etc. to jump on the spiritual path.

As I can see, people in the West do psychotherapy and spiritual work at the same time. And sometimes they use psychotherapy for their spiritual longings; sometimes they do therapy while they meditate.

I know a lot of psychotherapists and spiritual teachers feeling overtaxed with this situation. The psycho-therapeutical understanding of the spiritual often is very limited, spiritual teachers often emphasize that their work is not a therapeutical one.

I think there is a trap within some models of Transpersonal Psychology's understanding. Transpersonal Psychology today knows a lot of eastern and western theories but it appears to me that our scientific discipline often mixes up the menu with the dinner.

As we have a look: how healing psychologically as spiritually works in our societies, then we may discover its paradoxical character. It is not very often that people in western countries first heal on a personal than later on a transpersonal level.

In their majority they do it at once.

Spiritual energies sometimes strengthen; sometimes weaken the individual ego-structure. Sometimes biographical work supports the person more to open up spiritually, than the most secret spiritual rituals may happen.

We have to answer the question at which level of consciousness we are able to find the space where the personal and the transpersonal meets.

Apparently this happens in war-times. But another world war will have to sacrifice the human race; I don't know what that means in terms of oneness of the universe.

There is an inner war within most human beings, an existential fight between hate and love, between the evil and the good, between death and birth. People experienced in enhanced states of consciousness will know this place as the perinatal level of consciousness.

The perinatal level of consciousness inevitably opens up in our life journey as we start to become existential.

That means to look at the world and its nature – to look at relations, persons, experiences, to look at ourselves, from a perspective of death and birth. Around death and birth the spiritual meets the personal, at the moment of birth the spirit and the body had become one.

A lot of emotions, body-experiences, transpersonal phenomena may happen at the perinatal level. Finally, this process leads to a complete letting go of all expectations, of all identifications, a letting go of all power-struggles and fights. Many persons experience this process as dying.

This is a very personal experience; but at the same time the whole process is very impersonal, it is a spiritual process without an ego-intent. The perinatal process is engaged and kept in motion by the energy of emptiness which is the fullness of compassion.

We have to die to overcome the split of duality. This is the sacrifice we have to bring to realize oneness.

The perinatal level of consciousness is a discovery of *Stan Grof*, one of my dear teachers. Unfortunately, until now this level of consciousness is bypassed in many theories of transpersonal psychology.

To confront this level requires courage because there we have to face madness and death. Experiencing the perinatal level confronts us with an unbelievable suffering which both individuals and the world have to bear.

The natural answer people give to this suffering is pure compassion. Compassion is an expression of oneness.

Sometimes our biggest losses are our greatest win. **Considering that warfare in the world will be overcome and the holy land of peace will open up as a second birth of the universe.**

Then we'll be one with the becoming. We'll become conscious of being the evolutionary process ourselves. And there is the empty place of the individual self. And the emptiness is fulfilled with compassion, with love and the infinite possibilities of life.

What is oneness?

I don't know.

But listen to John Lennon – maybe he knows. I feel an attraction to it.

Imagine – John Lennon.