

The Outer Knower: The Hub of Human Consciousness



“Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.”

- Carl Jung

We all know that to live as a human can be very challenging, and that striving for psychological health, maturity, and wellbeing is an endless pursuit which, in virtually all cases, never achieves a true sense of completion. In their more mature and later years, most people settle for some degree of compromise between their ideals and the inability of attaining them in a complete way. They are divided inside, torn between inner contradictions. Their ego is unable to satisfy their superego, and so also unable to maintain a sufficiently positive self-image; they either live in self-denial or carry an unconscious sense of guilt and inadequacy at not being good enough because their life has become a never-ending compromise.

However, even though attaining perfection on the human level is impossible, each individual has the potential of going through a process of psychological transformation and healing to arrive at the optimal harmony possible, which we have chosen to call ‘transparent imperfection.’ We have looked at the issue of the human condition from many angles, and the question can be asked, “What is the key element which can effect a real transformation of our psychological self?”

Although there is no doubt that the awakening of the soul and establishment of the ground of pure subjectivity are the very prerequisites for human transformation, even these are not enough if the proper bridge between the soul and the human is not created.

And what is this bridge? It is none other than the outer knower.

The outer knower inhabits two worlds, the inner and the outer. He supports the evolution of the inner knower, but he must also take care of the countless issues of our human reality. He is the catalyst in the creation of both our inner and outer lives. He is the bridge and the substance which bonds the soul with the human, allowing them to be experienced as one being.

But to become a bridge between the soul and the human, the outer knower must first be realized. The observer (the unconscious outer knower) not only cannot serve as such a bridge, but he actually causes us to live in fragmentation and delusion on the human level and in a state of constant disturbance and loss of energy on our spiritual one. The realization of the outer knower is a fundamental prerequisite for our general spiritual awakening, but its initial key role is the awakening of the inner knower as conscious me. It is only through the foundation of conscious me that the observer transmutes itself into the outer knower, and becomes the conscious center of intelligence. Thus, the outer knower is the one who can truly and constructively engage in human intelligence.

The outer knower could be said to be our human intelligence. This intelligence serves our existence on the human level, but also needs to be aligned with our spiritual side and its evolution. The outer knower's design is naturally identified with the well-being of the human self, ensuring its survival and supporting it in its search for happiness. But the outer knower's human intelligence is conditioned by its countless experiences, personal and collective memories, and beliefs. Accordingly, based on his integration with the inner knower, the outer knower's intelligence needs to find a way to activate higher spiritual intention while still operating within the constraints of the subconscious human mind from which it draws information and interprets its perception of reality.

The outer knower therefore finds himself in a constant process of seeking to give a higher feedback to the subconscious mind and psychological self through using his links to spiritual discernment and creativity. Learning how to function through his human consciousness with its countless conditionings and how to respond as maturely as possible to the never-ending struggles and demands of human existence are ongoing key challenges for the outer knower. But his connection both to the inner knower and to his own pure subjectivity gives him a certain distance and perspective, allowing sufficient disidentification from human level issues, so he can deal with them using increasing levels of spiritual discernment. This same spiritual discernment with its higher responses is also used in dealing with the emotional aspects of the psychological self.

The spiritual power of the outer knower derives from his living in a state of surrender to the inner knower. This spiritual power should increasingly permeate his human consciousness, creating the ground for its transformation, which includes the beneficial transformation of the psycho-emotional self. Looking at it from just one angle, it is human consciousness that needs to be transformed but, seeing it in a deeper way, it is the

outer knower – who is the subject to that consciousness – who needs to be transformed; specifically, this transformation refers to the part of the outer knower who lives as the center of intelligence of human consciousness.

A person who does not have the outer knower is a human monkey. A human monkey can improve but it cannot transform. Only a human being can transform, and one of the prerequisites for being a human being is having realized the outer knower. How can a creature who does not have a center in intelligence aspire to psychological transformation or to purification of any kind? The idea alone is irrational and absurd. He or she is what Gurdjieff rightfully called a ‘man machine’. He thinks he has consciousness and free will and that he does things based on his own conscious decisions, but all is just happening to him; he is no more than a marionette, an animated figure in the soulless puppet show of humanity.

Although having the outer knower has a deeply transforming effect on personality, it does not mean that the whole of one’s personality is automatically completely transformed. As we said, the outer knower must operate using the subconscious mind with its countless conditionings which were formed prior to the outer knower’s awakening. The subconscious mind is a creature of habit, living through constant repetition of its programmed tendencies. Not all these tendencies are necessarily negative and, indeed, some are useful, but the majority of them are negative – simply because they take us further into the realm of forgetfulness - and some of these are either borderline or outright evil towards others and towards oneself. The only way to dissolve their negativity is for them to receive intelligent feedback from the outer knower as they arise but, unless the outer knower has the necessary integrity, strength, and intelligence, he is still very vulnerable to succumbing to them. This makes clear why an inseparable part of the path to our spiritual and human transformation includes ongoing vigilance, continual refinement of our character, and the development of the essential qualities of spirit.

What is negativity? Its definition varies according to different perspectives but, from a spiritual sense, any thought or emotion that arises without a connection to the knower can be seen as negative, because unconsciousness itself is negative. For the moment, we can define negativity as the manifestation of any tendency, thought, or emotion that is not linked to the higher intention of the soul, that is not connected to the natural and innate goodness, integrity and honor of our higher self.

This negativity lives in our unconscious mind and is ever-present, even when temporarily inactive. It is our shadow, the darkness inside our being that erodes the very fabric of our soul. Before we can even aspire to transform it, we need to raise it to the threshold of the conscious mind. Hence, getting in touch with our subconscious is a critical part of our journey to completion. It is only by becoming conscious, not only as the outer knower, but also with what is false in our mind, that real transformation is possible and we can truly assume our role as creators of our higher destiny.

The question as to whether people are inherently good or evil has puzzled thinkers since time immemorial. We tend to confuse goodness with morality, but morality is a conditioned 'goodness' that has no root in our soul and can easily become its very opposite – immorality. Furthermore, morality sees good through the lenses of social rules and regulations that are defined very differently according to the culture in which they have evolved. What is moral in one culture might well be considered immoral in another. What history teaches us is that people in general are not good and, even though religions or social training conditions people to behave in what is considered to be an acceptable good or moral manner, when their primal instincts are unleashed the same people suddenly become evil. Some exceptional individuals manage to maintain their basic goodness, even when their life and the lives of those they love are under threat, but often even this is just a similar, but deeper, conditioned morality. People who are truly innately good are very rare on this planet for the simple reason that there is nothing good in being unconscious.

To be good, we must be good to our me. To love others, we must love our me. To know others, we must know our own self. Without a connection to our own subjectivity, the knower, our goodness, love, compassion, and understanding are all illusions. Trying to maintain them without having a foundation of a self is like trying to keep candle burning on a windy night while surrounded by a vast darkness.

Dealing with our negativity is an important aspect of the path. But what is the root of our negative tendencies? While it is not in the scope of this article to analyze the human personality, we can summarize some main points here. The illusory self, or the observer, has developed many strategies to cope with the challenges of living in the physical world and, above all, as respects those of living in the human world. For what really is the world we, as humans, live in? The world we inhabit has been dominated by human society for so long that we do not know any other way of existence; it is the world of the countless interactions of the human monkeys. They need to work for each other, beg or steal from each other, and please or dominate each other to survive physically and psychologically.

It has been like this from the beginning of collective humanity and there is no indication that it is ever going to change. Physical and psychological survival are the average human's main objectives, and they are both interconnected; if other people do not like you, they will not help you to survive on the physical level. However, psychological survival can also predominate, as when we seek the approval of others, becoming obsessively concerned with what others think of us in our endless search for emotional gratification, completion and peace. Such psychological obsession fuels one's infatuation with one's self-image, the internal projection of what others think or might think of us.

In modern psychology, Freud's ego and superego concepts are often dismissed as outdated and unscientific. This is rather foolish. What is there to object to in them? Perhaps some of his ideas were imprecise, but his concepts of the id, ego and superego comprised the most accurate description of the human personality's structure ever discovered. Everybody is torn between the id's and superego's conflicting demands, with

the ego struggling to reconcile the two. The id represents our basic desires, everything that we want. It is like a child who wants something and refuses to accept that it cannot have it. The superego represents all the 'you shoulds' or 'you must nots' which are imposed on us from an early age by our parents and society. The superego's strength is motivated through our having, on one hand, an illusion of pride from fulfilling different ideals and, on the other, guilt from an internally felt threat of external punishment. The superego is not all bad, but the way it tries to control the ego is artificial and based on external authority. Furthermore, most of the principles of the superego are unrealistic, idealistic, or just simply wrong. Essentially, people who have not risen above identifying themselves as the observer want to be good for the wrong reasons.

In the middle ages, many knights went on crusades to retake Jerusalem and the holy land. Even present-day Israel has been founded on a similar irrational ideal. The 'noble' crusading knights wanted to serve god and the then deluded and temporally-oriented popes as means of purifying themselves from sin and attaining heaven. They slaughtered countless people with utter mercilessness and did unthinkable evil, wreaking unimaginable horror – and all in the name of their Christian god. Were they mere victims of the accepted superego of that time? Yes, but their ego was also insufficiently developed to rebel against all that utter insanity. We might think that people in those times were primitive and relatively unevolved, but humanity and human nature today have not changed at all from those historic times. Today, people are just as cruel and barbaric in nature, and just as controlled and influenced by evil and self-seeking politicians, corporations and religions. We live in a primitive world, and those who yield to the tyranny of the ones who wield authority and power are really no better than those who control them.

The superego is inside you. When you sit in meditation and feel like punishing yourself in all kinds of ways, why do you think you are doing this to yourself? Why would you keep hurting yourself like this? It is your superego that is torturing you, preventing you from experiencing genuine self-love and self-forgiveness. Unless you begin to love yourself and embrace your very self with tenderness, you will remain a hostage to the superego. In the endless struggle with the superego, your ego can reach the point of finding it cannot cope anymore and it, too, eventually becomes corrupted. Guilt, pride, self-punishment, humility, and arrogance are all different tricks the ego uses to manage the superego, and all of them fail because the superego is like the kind of parent whom you can never please. The ego has no chance of reconciling the id with the superego; it tries and tries, but then finally dies trying. And the main reason for this is that the ego is unconscious and fragmented; it has no real self. As such, the ego cannot oppose the superego and find a sufficient level of equilibrium between the id's primitive human desires and the superego's internalized rules based on external conditioning and authority.

The outer knower is the true version of what the ego should be, the center of our individual intelligence. He is open to hearing and learning from all angles about what is right and wrong, he uses the 'inbuilt' intuitive resonance of his own discernment to decide his own truth in these matters. The properly realized outer knower is free of the

traps of the societally and psychologically conditioned superego – idealism, humility, arrogance and all that nonsense. He has no further need to prove to others that he is worthy. He seeks harmony between his soul and his human nature; he seeks the ultimate balance between the perfection of the spirit and the imperfection of the world. It is not true that he has no ‘agenda’. His agenda is happiness, but a happiness founded in reality, not one based on psychological and emotional imagination. He wants to be happy through union with his soul and he also wants to enjoy peace and happiness as a human. He knows that complete happiness on the human level is impossible, but he also knows that maximizing the harmony and fulfillment which is possible as a human is an essential part of his journey and destiny. And to attain this destiny, he must mature on the human level and support the essential purification of the human psyche.

Now, to return to our initial question: “How can the awakening of the outer knower help our human transformation?” Firstly, with the outer knower, there is now ‘someone’ who can be transformed. It is impossible to transform ‘no one’, for then nobody is there to be transformed. Next, having the seat in his subjectivity (and absolute link to the inner knower) allows the outer knower to take a step back from all the habitual and other tendencies that arise in personality and to provide feedback based on his intelligence. This does not mean that all the feedback he gives is perfect, but he is learning; it is his intention to learn, to be open to and explore various options to find the best key to the magic of transformation for whatever the particular issue at hand is.

The main power the outer knower must assume is that which comes from learning to free himself from the superego and from emotional dependency on others who continue to live as human monkeys. He must learn to stand alone, and learn how relate to the world from his center of dignity and self-love. While he is not invested in his self-image, he is able to create one so that he can have a perspective of himself on his human level. He does not seek perfection, because that is just another of the superego’s traps. He does not need to fit into the moral paradigm of society to prove that he is good enough. He no longer cares about being good enough, nor does he seek the approval of human monkeys. And, while he does not care about being good enough, he does care about being good, but this ‘good’ is more as a natural expression of who he is. All that is expressed from our conscious basic goodness, even when it conflicts with collective morality, is good.

Those who have awakened and love their own self are naturally free from evil because they experience the whole world as an extension of their self-love. All is love for the one who is in love with the light of his own self.

Blessings,
Anadi

For a full glossary of terminology, please visit our website: www.anaditeaching.com/glossary