

# RADIANT MIND: Life at the end of all struggle

By Peter Fenner, Ph.D.

Radiant mind is buddhamind or awakened mind. When we live in radiant mind, life is dynamic and always changing, yet it's completely still and unchanging at the same time. We're living in time but also connected with a reality that's timeless and invisible.

Radiant mind is a way of being totally in life while fully presencing unwavering, contentless awareness. Radiant mind arises when unconditioned awareness infuses every aspect and dimension of our embodied mind-experience. In the language of Buddhism, this is the indivisibility of form and emptiness.

Radiant mind is the ultimate experience. When we're resting in radiant mind, there's no where further to go. We are totally fulfilled. The experience can't get any better, and it can't degrade. Nothing is missing! And the amazing thing is that nothing needs to change at the conditioned level for this to happen, not at the environmental level, or at the level of our thoughts and feelings. That's why yogis in the Dzogchen and other nondual traditions keep saying, "*Emaho! Wow! Incredible! Wonderful! How totally remarkable!*"

Radiant mind is the state that the great 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian sage Nisargadatta describes so beautifully when he says: "*When I experience myself as nothing, this is wisdom. When I experience myself as everything, this is love. And between these two my life flows.*" This is radiant mind.

Strictly, we don't need to do anything to rest in this state because the end of all our searching can never be somewhere else! It's always where we are. If it's somewhere else, we're not at the end. There is somewhere further to go. In the present moment, nothing is ever missing because nothing more or less can ever be happening. We can't take anything away from "this" or add anything to it, not in this moment. And this is all there ever is. There is only this.

Radiant mind is this experience. It can't be different from this. This is what it means to say that radiant mind is nondual. When I say "this experience" or "this state," I'm not talking about the particulars—you being in your living room, at the café, or wherever, reading this, and me at home. When I say "this state," what am I talking about? We are already transitioning into the unconditioned, because we can't say what "this" is. I don't know what "this" is. I can't know what "this" is because it's not an object of awareness.

People often ask, why aren't we always in this space? Why do we create a gap between now and where we want to be? It's like a bad habit. We're conditioned to do it. This is why we suffer. In radiant mind we close the gap between where we are and where we want to be, by seeing again and again that we can only be here, right now, exactly where we are. We come

home to ourselves at the conditioned level, the level of our beliefs, history, body, and relationship with the world, and this lets us enter radiant mind.

The conditioned body-mind is normally conditioned by our preferences. We move towards what we like and away from what we don't like. Yet most of the time we are incomplete. Our needs are rarely totally fulfilled. Even when things are great we think of having more or want our pleasures to last longer.

We're experts in creating that "something is missing." That's why Buddhists say that samsara is so intractable. But it doesn't have to be like this. It's possible to be immersed in the world of sensations, feelings and relationships without needing things to be different, or wanting the good things to last for ever.

So how do we escape the grip of samsara? We need some keys to walk through the gateless gate, as they say in Zen. The best key is to see that the gate is gateless. It's never anywhere else, and we don't have to walk through it. If the gate is somewhere else, we can't walk through it! The gate is wherever we are. In fact, there is no gate. We're already through it. This is a great key.

Another key is to see that there's no one to walk through the gate, no one who's trapped or becomes liberated. This is the key of "self-inquiry." We look for the "I," the being who experiences everything that's experienced. When we look for ourselves in this way, we can't find ourselves as the experiencer, as the thinker or the seer. We can think: "This is me. I am here." But we can't locate the thinker of these thoughts. Suddenly there's no me, and so there's no boundary between ourselves and the world. We become no one and everything at the same time.

Often when people first touch radiant mind they'd like to stay in this state permanently. This wish is unrealistic and creates a lot of confusion and frustration. For most people, certainly for me, radiant mind comes and goes. We learn how to rest here more frequently and for longer periods. Certainly, over time, it's possible to discover deeper and more reliable sources of fulfillment and contentment.

If you are interested in gaining a firsthand experience of radiant mind, join Peter's network or participate in his programs: <http://bit.ly/kfHJEV>.

**Peter Fenner, Ph.D.** is a leader in the Western adaptation of Buddhist nondual wisdom and a pioneer in the new field of nondual psychotherapy.

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