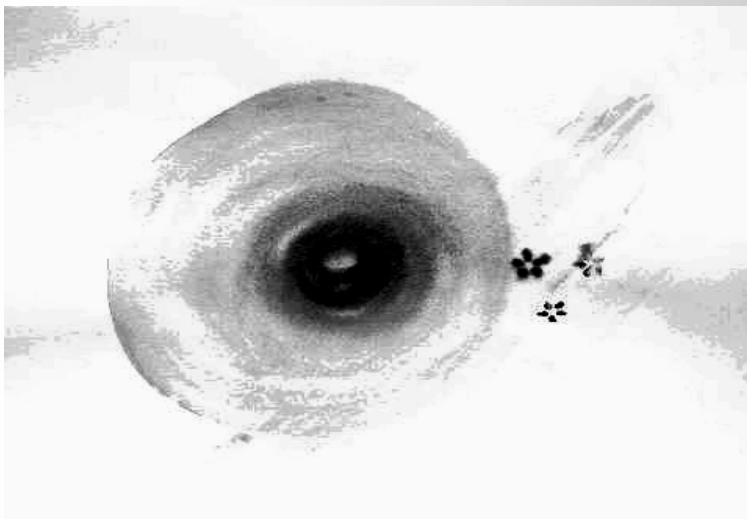


The Three Faces of Spirit

Spirit can be approached in first-, second-, and third-person perspectives. These perspectives can be thought of as ways that we approach the Ultimate, as well as dimensions of the Ultimate as it first manifests. Using Vedanta as an example, there is nirguna Brahman, which is the Ultimate without any qualities whatsoever, including that one, and hence beyond conceptualization as well (e.g. Emptiness, Ayn, radical Godhead) and there is saguna Brahman, or the Ultimate as it begins to manifest in the world of Form. So as soon as the Ultimate manifests in the world of Form, the very first form exists in quadrants, or simply the Big Three of I, Thou/We, and It. So we can approach the Ultimate as I (e.g. I AMness, Big Mind), Thou (the Presence of God, the Blessed Other, a Loving God), and It (Kosmic Contemplation, the Web of Life, the Great Perfection of this and every moment). What follows is a short contemplation session focusing on one of these dimensions of Spirit and perspectives of awareness. We hope you enjoy this affirmation of all three Faces of God which are also ultimately three dimensions of our own being: Consciousness/Awareness, Love/Gratitude, Wonder/Bliss.



Kosmic Contemplation ~ Sample God in 3rd Person Meditation ~ Terry Patten

In Kosmic contemplation, we simply notice and feel the entirety of this utterly Vast and Mysterious Kosmos, inner and outer, gross, subtle and causal. This includes the whole sweep of contemplative practices from nature mysticism to mystical philosophy (including much Integral philosophy). The paragraphs that follow embody this process of Kosmic contemplation, describing in turn the gross, subtle, and causal bodies of God.

The Gross Physical Body of God

This whole life, Beautiful and Terrible, full of logic and meaning, and utterly beyond knowing is what human beings point to when they use words like “Divinity” and “God.” God, thus understood, is both transcendent and immanent—utterly beyond any experience, and simultaneously implicit and present in every shred of experience, in every particle of this amazing physical Cosmos, gross, subtle and causal.

God can be found in the physical world—in the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds. God can be seen and felt in the grass, the trees, the earth and the wind. God is audible in bird and animal songs, and is visible in the eyes and bodies of all our fellow-creatures—as well as in all our fellow human beings and all we do, our creativity and beautiful artistic expression, our science and industry, our stupidity and brutality, our trivial entertainment and our most profound creations and utterances.

Contemplate the dance of this physical world across time. Across the vast epochs of evolutionary time, every living creature emerged naturally from and as the Body of God. The Big Bang flung forth our whole universe, spewing all space-time into being, including all the matter and energy of our cosmos, including what eventually became our sun and earth and moon. Across billions of years of evolutionary time, our mother matter congealed as a wet planet with a hospitable atmosphere, a beautiful blue nest that gave birth, after a few billion years of unimaginable fire, remarkably, to liquid oceans, and then to living cells. And across more billions years of evolution, those cells evolved into more complex cells, and then tiny animals, and gradually, over hundreds of millions of years, into a vast, intricate, beautiful community of plants and animals, and then, over more millions of years into all the plants and animals we see today, including us, homo sapiens, all interacting in an immense, remarkable, unified community. This web of life reflects and displays the qualities of God, the very

qualities that gave birth to all of it. We can see God all around us in the form of our whole natural world, and everything we see.

The Subtle-Energy Bodies of God

Divinity is visible not just in the physicality of our world, but the energy body of God. All natural processes and every living thing are visibly suffused with moving life-energy. And in living beings that life-energy reaches out and dances and desires and feels. You can see energy in every living being, rippling and flowing through their chakras and meridians, and shining from their eyes. The animating energetics of our world shows up the moving energies in the bodies and feelings and minds of all people, and creatures, and plants, and even natural forces. The animating energetics of nature are vast, intricate, and incomprehensible. Our daily life is, seen more deeply, a multidimensional dance of feeling-light.

This Divine Light refracts itself into every form of subtle energy – ranging from the etheric energy we can feel moving and buzzing in our bodies, flowing through our charkas and meridians, and radiating out into space from our skin, shining out in all directions like a great halo up into the realm of feelings including all our range of good and bad feelings and emotions and up into the realms of mind, including every kind of ordinary thought and up into the sweetness of higher intuitive apprehensions, and all the way up into the finest, most subtle, transcendental intuition, more sublime even than the most blissful thought, and radiating up, out, above the head, as Radiance.

Divinity expresses itself as Light. We can consciously participate in it. We can open ourselves and feel and breathe and conduct the force of Life, the Light, the subtle energy, the Holy Spirit. We can breathe the Holy Spirit in, down the front of the body, and we can feel this Divinity descending down as fullness of life, as vitality and presence. Then we can feel it turn at the base of the body and ascend up through the spine as we exhale, rising up to and into and even above the head where we can feel lit as Radiant Light and Blissful Freedom.

The Perfectly Still and Silent Causal Body of God

But there is another vast dimension to God's body, not the gross physical body and not even the subtle energy body of God. The causal body of God is That which is unmoving, unbroken and eternal. All the conditions of our human lives come and go, just as we are born and die, but God survives, unimpaired, undiminished, unblinking, undistracted, undying, uncompromising, and absolute. God is the One Who is not born, Who does not die, Who

does not age or change. God is the Ultimate Reality, the Ultimate subject behind every conditional experience, the Self behind every conditional Self, the I Am behind every I, the very Self of every being and all existence.

That One is beyond description—unmoving, silent, conscious and perfectly Present. This One is the very Space in which everything in the whole Kosmos arises and falls. Before all those animating energetics can be felt or seen, there is the Feeler, the Seer, the Space in which it all arises. God is That, the Field, the Opening, the Clearing, the Still and Silent Awareness in which all things arise and fall. Before the still and silent Heart gives birth to Light and Mind and Feeling and Embodiment, It simply IS, perfect and sufficient. In That Presence, all that arises and falls is reflected for what it is, passing and secondary. This radical Divine Person is witnessing and, in essence, *living* you, me, all beings, and all events, alive in every desire and action, but especially and essentially as perfect Stillness. This silent God is the clearing in which every perspective, arises... and falls.



Integral Prayer & Communion – Sample God in 2nd Person Meditation – Terry Patten

It is a profound and paradoxical matter to turn and face the Unfathomable Mystery of Existence. How is it possible? How can you face the Ultimate, Conscious, Unlimited, Almighty, and Omnipresent?

Integral Communion is to open the whole body, gross, subtle and causal, into communion with the Universal Mystery of Existence as one's most Intimate Beloved. It involves unkinking the physical body, freeing the feeling breath, opening the emotions and turning them towards the Beloved. It involves

Even if you've never considered it before, your relationship with God must be one of love. After all, God *is* Love. What is it to open to a personal meeting with the Love itself, the very Heart that expresses itself in your heart and every heart?

In Integral Communion, we open and turn to face this God who is Love, knowing that God is also Primordial Silence and Light, the Animating Spirit of everything everywhere. So turn to face the Being Who has powered your every step, your every thought.

This God who is Love is Incomprehensible. God is not just what we can relate to, but is inherently more vast, more uncompromising, more fierce, more enormous than mere words can say. Let yourself become humble and sober as you Behold more weight, more power, more seriousness, more gravitas than any human mind and heart and body can drop open to meet.

Can you bring yourself to face and open yourself to intimacy with the most Unimaginably Huge, Perfectly Still Presence? What would it require, what would it feel like to stop averting your gaze from that One?

In Integral Communion, you open your breath and feeling to commune with the very Power that drives the universe. It's impossible; but the practice is to do your best, to open as fully as possible and to feel whatever limits you can't open beyond. The practice is to turn towards God, to open emotionally to God, to relax the automatic defenses of the mind and psyche.

Do your best to face the God Who is Light. Do your best to Feel without limitations. Do your best to let feeling extend to Infinity. Do your best to inhale and exhale the Holy Spirit. Do your best to face the boundless and universal presence of God, to conduct the Infinite Energy of Life, to open to the Perfectly Still and Silent Absolute.

Such communion ennobles, enlivens, and empowers you even while it demands profound humility. It involves the senses, the emotions, the energy centers, the mind, and the higher mental functions. The energetic channels of the whole body must open and flow with the Holy Spirit.

Let your emotions open intimately in Communion. You are opening to the same One Who can be seen shining in the eyes of every Beloved, whether your Lover, your child, your parent, your pet, or yourself looking back at you in the mirror. That Shining, Beloved God-Light—can you face Her, can you face Him, can you feel the One who has given birth to you? The One to whom you will return in your dying?

What does it take to open yourself to face your most Intimate Friend, Mother, Father, and dear Beloved, the only one who knows you by heart, the only one who has been there with you always? Here is the One with whom you have been in relationship every moment of your life, even when you have been oblivious. Every day of your life, you have only been swimming in the ocean of God's Body, Love's Body, the Body of Light. So soften your heart, and open your breath and turn to face your most intimate, but vastest, wisest, most patient Friend.

Before you is the one who gave birth to you, the One who is living you, who has been Being you from the beginning.

Face the One Who is the Self of your very Self, the I behind your own “I.” Face the eyes that gaze back at you from a place beyond the death of all your hopes, dreams, ideals, loved-ones, and identities. Dare to gaze without blinking into eyes fooled by nothing, undistractable, un sentimental, gazing right at you, into you, and through you. Can you be present with the Presence who never flinches, Who has always been perfectly silent, still, conscious, and undecieved? The overwhelming enormity and eternity of God’s perspective cannot be comprehended. The Perfect Infinite Beloved can only be glimpsed amidst your wholesale Awe, humility, and surrender. Let yourself know the weight, the potency, the purity, the consciousness of the Divine Person. Let your heart be outshined, baked, transformed by a real encounter with the Absolute.

Allow the Grace
Allow the humility
Allow the awe
Allow the surrender.

Let your defenses soften and your whole being open into Sacred Communion with the Divine Totality, with your deepest Intimate, your Beloved, right here and right now.



Awakening as the “I” of Spirit ~ Sample God in 1st Person Meditation ~ Terry Patten

We can awaken directly as Spirit through various practices of formless meditation, or the experience of 2nd-person communion can deepen so much that all boundaries between you and God dissolve. You may even dissolve into oneness through ecstatic contemplation of the totality of being. In any case, you may begin to notice something mysterious: There is no separation, no difference, no radical distinction at the level of identity between you and that Heart and that Light Who dances into every kind of manifestation. The little “you” dissolves into the limitless “us”.

However you get there, the discovery is the same: You are all of it. This whole incredibly

complex, swirling and vast energetic dynamics, infinitely bigger than your body and mind, are nowhere more fully and actually themselves than when they are showing up as you, as your very body-mind. This is first-person awakening *as Spirit*.

You Are the Light itself, alive, awake and flowing. You are the life-force itself, alive everywhere, springing forth from the prior Ground of Being in every moment, dancing life into life in every moment, and surrendering itself back into the Unmanifest in every moment – but in all its dynamism nowhere more at its center, nowhere more fully the Light, nowhere more fully released into synchronicity as *Itself* than Where you stand. You are the Light. The Light is being Light most quintessentially here and now – in the breathing of your body, the shining of your eyes, radiance of your mind and feeling, the pulsing Life you Are.

Conscious in all her cells, Gaia is conscious nowhere more than here, as you. You are Nature. You are the web of life. In the rhythms and waves of your breaths can be heard and felt the ancient pulse of the oceans. You are not separate, not even separable.

Most deeply, let go into knowing yourself as you are, freshly being born and dying in every moment, birthed again and again as the Body of God. Birthed and dying like the grasses and the trees, the ants and the antelope. You are the body of the Mystery. This Body in which you hear these words is the Body of the Big Bang in one its Billions and billions and quadrillions of expressions. Not separate! The Big Bang is nowhere more itself than here, being you, enacting you, showing up as You

You are all of it, yes. But, more fundamentally, the you behind the skin-encapsulated ego, the I behind the I, is the Awareness in which it all arises. The space in which the body-mind arises, the space in which the Big Bang arises.

Notice this page and the other objects around you. Notice your bodily sensations.

And notice: you are not these sounds or sensations. These sounds are all arising as objects of the Awareness you truly are.

Now notice your feelings... ideas... memories... desires... and sense of personal identity...

All of these are arising as objects of the Awareness you truly are. You are not your feelings. You are not your ideas. You are not your memories, You are not your desires. You are not even your sense of personal identity. All of them are arising as objects in the Awareness that

is You.

You are the conscious Seer who is seeing all this. You are the conscious Feeler who is feeling all this. You are the conscious Hearer who is hearing all this. The Seer who you are is not radically separate or different from the One who is the Seer of all experience. Who you are is the Seer, the very Self behind the I in you and the I in me and the I in everyone. You are Empty and Free. And you have always been.

You have never moved. You have always been you. You have always been perfectly silent, utterly open, and infinitely deep. You are the ultimate depth that was before all birth and will be beyond all death.

The personality and mind and body and all the personality and locality of your individuality are reflected in the Consciousness, the Self Who you truly are. All of that is real and necessary and deserves to be honored. But do not forget that it is superficial to Who You Are most deeply; most profoundly you are not merely or even primarily that. You are the "I am" whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. Really.

So do not imagine that you are seeking or finding or forgetting the One you truly are, the one you've always been...