

GREEN TEA LEAVES
Monthly newsletter of Awarezen
~ June 2025 ~



Friends,

Welcome to the first issue of Awarezen's monthly newsletter, *Green Tea Leaves*. For all of you out there who love drinking green tea as I do, you are in for a treat. But if not, you are still in for a treat. Each month, I will share some of my thoughts and experiences as a way of connecting with all of you my readers by surfing the transparent ripples of shared experience, from the dimension of our shared being. May these reflections bring great benefit and joy.

As I write this, I am aware of the many upheavals and distressing events that have shaken the world these past few days. While war between Russia and Ukraine remains unabated while conflict between India and Pakistan had barely cooled down after a dangerous flare-up; not to mention the ongoing human tragedy in Gaza resulting from Israeli military actions and aid blockades, we now see a devastating new war between Israel and Iran with tit-for-tat bombings destroying infrastructure and human lives in both countries. As we see this tragedy unfold, our minds are naturally disturbed, and anxieties are bound to surface.

If we are to *look at and into* our anxieties and disturbances, instead of turning away from them and escaping into real or imagined pleasures of our senses, what can we discover about our condition? What can we understand about our predicament and the way out, which is freedom of the heart that manifests as freedom from conflict in our world?

Beyond Objective Content

For one, we realize that this freedom can never be found in the objects of our experience — things, possessions, accolades, achievements, even people and relationships, or more abstract ‘things’ like our ideas, beliefs, and dogmas. None of these things last. None of them provide lasting satisfaction. None of them remain a source of happiness and fulfilment devoid of sorrow and grief. No, freedom is not found there.

Objects of experience, however crude or subtle, are transient and unreliable. They might temporarily relieve us of our itch for satisfaction. They might provide a fleeting sensation of pleasure but ultimately leave us hollow and dissatisfied. But if we are to look deeper, what we find is that the relief and pleasure of temporary gratification points to a more fundamental truth. This sense of relief and pleasure is but a glimpse into the innately blissful and fulfilled wholeness of our being. By the term “being,” we are speaking about that primordial sense of existence and awareness that makes us alive, that accounts for our experiential nature. Some call this the pure experience of “I am.”

This basic sense of “I am” is what underlies our entire lifeworld. Insight enables us to see that this “I am” is but a mere label, an imputation albeit the very first one, that is applied to the bare immediate sense of direct knowing. We unwittingly conflate this “amness” with our innermost identity. We fail to realize that this label “I am” is not an inherent reality but a transparent effulgence of sheer awareness itself, a dynamic modulation of awareness into the shape and form of an imputation, a conceptual label, a mere name.

Beyond “Amness”

But awareness *as it is and in itself* is impervious to the constraints of language and conception and thus cannot be said *to be or not to be*. Hence, for some, this sheer sense of “I am” can be given the name “God,” pointing to its infinite, boundaryless, unstained, unborn, undying, undivided, and unconfined empty nature that is ceaselessly responsive in love. At this juncture, we shall not probe further into whether this awareness is validly “God” or otherwise. Very much depends on our narrative structure and mythic framework.

What “being” really is at its heart is naked unconfined empty cognizance — a sheer primordial knowing or awareness beyond concept and word. Yet, being is not some essential entity set apart from the totality of experience or the infinite variety of objects that form the content of experience. “Being” or pristine awareness is simply, as a concession to

essentialist language, the very fabric of experience or primal ingredient out of which all experience — seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, perceiving, emoting, willing, attending — is made. But even “being” as we have seen is empty in and of itself, a contingent and imputed label placed upon a process of knowing.

Effulgent Emptiness

Hence, at the furthest point where language can go and where it comes to its end, all we can say is that emptiness — the heart essence of what “being” really and inseparably is — dances forth in its natural effulgence to become the subjective knower and objective content of all experience. The knower and the known, thinker and thought, feeler and feeling, sensor and sensed, and so forth are but effulgent displays of empty cognizance or cognizant emptiness. That is all that can be conceived and articulated on this side of creation, so to speak.

Freedom that is transparent and irrevocable is found in being *knowingly knowing* in its sheer emptiness and luminosity, resting openly and freshly in the now, continuously. Only then is there the revealing of the cosmic mystery of grace that is Christ. Through and in Christ, we are drawn into the dance of love that theologians call the Trinity. All genuinely loving relationships mirror this triune dance of love — similarly empty of inherency and luminous yet intimately personal in fluid procession. The immaculate immensity of this revelation transcends all our binary ideas and limited vocabulary. We shall leave this mystery for another time.

Everyday Wisdom

Try out these ideas for the next month:

1. *Observe carefully and clearly* the quality of your experience from moment to moment to see where you get stuck and suffer.
2. Take a walk in nature and open up your senses to all you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel in your surroundings, releasing your stuckness in daydreams, mental dramas, old memories, and imaginations; just be *wide awake in open contact* with all that appears.
3. Journal your reflections on stuckness, suffering, and discontent, contrasting that to the *quality of being* when your senses and heart are open to each moment with presence and care.

Tell me how you go with these wisdom ideas. Write to me. I may or may not respond to every email, but I will surely read them all.

Blessings always,

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