
What is Ultimate Reality?

When we, human beings, through our most enlightened representatives, look for the highest principle of being, life, existence, consciousness—the Supreme Power, the Origin of all Substance, the ultimate Deity, in fact—we find It is one and the same thing looked at from different human standpoints. It is nameless but we may call it, Mind. There is no point where we can come into contact with It for It transcends everything, every human capacity. When we look for It in relation to the universe which includes us, we may call It World-Mind, or in religious terminology, God. Here there is real possibility of a contact, for in our innermost self the connection is already there.

The ultimate reality is one and the same, no matter what it is called; to the Chinese mystic it is TAO, that is, the Significance; to the Christian mystic it is GOD; to the Chinese philosopher it is TAT CHI, that is, The Great Extreme; to the Hindu philosopher it is TAT, that is, Absolute Existence. It has its own independent, everlasting, invisible, and infinite existence, while all worldly things and creatures are but fragmentary and fleeting expressions of IT on a lower sphere altogether. It lies deeply concealed as their innermost substance and persists through their changes of form.

What Jesus called "the only true God" is the ultimate formless reality, not the thoughts about it or the pictures of it created in human imaginations. It is an object of insight, not of sense or thought.

When we look for the last explanation of the universal phenomenon, we find one persistent and ultimate reality...
Consciousness.

I believe in a higher power behind the universe. Call it God, if you like. I believe in a higher power behind man. Call it the soul, if you like to. Such beliefs do not appeal to the cocktail-soaked cynics and sophisticates of our era.

We found it necessary, in the interests of greater precision and better exposition, to restrict the term "Overself" to represent the ultimate reality of man, and to introduce the term "World-Mind" to represent the ultimate reality of the universe.

Overself is the inner or true self of man, reflecting the divine being and attributes. The Overself is an emanation from the ultimate reality but is neither a division nor a detached fragment of it. It is a ray shining forth but not the sun itself.

The mystic attains knowledge and experience of his own soul. This is not the same as knowledge of the ultimate Reality. The two are akin, of course—much more closely than the little ego and the Real are akin. But the Godhead is the Flame of which the soul is only a spark; to claim complete union with it seems blasphemous.

Every kind of experience, whether it be wakeful, dream, hypnotic, or hallucinatory, is utterly and vividly real to the ego at the time its perceptions are operating on that particular level. Why, then, amidst such bewildering relativity, do we talk of divine experience as being the ultimate reality? We speak this way because it is concerned with what bestows the sense of reality to all the other forms of experience. And that is nothing else than the central core of pure Mind within us, the unique mysterious source of all possible kinds of our consciousness. This, if we can find it, is what philosophy calls the truly real world.

Discovering Ultimate Reality

He feels intuitively that there is, or ought to be, some elusive element, principle, purpose, or Deity behind all life and all Nature—but is it possible for a human being to become acquainted with IT?

That which really is, as opposed to that which appears to be, behind all the countless objects of this varied universe, is one alone, beginningless, endless, the source of all, the parent of the "I"-consciousness. This truth provides the final hope for man. Somewhere along his way he will discover it, act upon it, and be redeemed. This will be his last conversion, his final salvation, his best quest. Then only will the horrors he has contributed to the race's history begin to fade out. All else is utopian chimera based upon wishful thoughts and fanciful imaginations.

An existence which has no higher aims than purely physical ones, no nobler activities than merely personal ones, no inner reference to a spiritual purpose, has to depend only on its own small resources. It has failed to benefit by its connection with the power behind the universe.

All that really matters is how one lives one's life. But relative-plane activities do not constitute all there is to living. Consciousness rises from the plane behind the mind, and this region, like the outer world, needs to be explored with competent guides—its possibilities and benefits fully revealed by each individual for himself. Living will begin to achieve its own purpose when one's outer life becomes motivated, guided, and balanced by the fruits of one's inner findings.

More than anything, men need today to find some kind of contact with the Higher Power, which is behind them, and behind the universe.

Half of our puzzling problems follow in the train of our naïve but erroneous belief that matter is itself an ultimate reality.

Every thoughtful scientist now knows that just as matter has turned out to be a manifestation of force, so force will eventually turn out to be a manifestation of something higher; he perceives that matter is really an appearance behind which stands the reality force; so an ultimate reality must be reckoned as standing behind force. In other words, there is but ONE Reality and various forms under which it appears.

The moment we establish a right relation with the Mind behind the Universe, in that moment we begin to see as ultimately good certain experiences which we formerly thought to be evil, and we begin to see as dreamlike many sufferings which we formerly saw as real.

We see that life is encircled by a great Being, that the Mind behind the universe—although so still and uncommunicative and, apparently, unconcerned—is in reality sending its messages in varied ways all the time.

Infinite Reality is Creative Energy

The Infinite Reality cannot be reasoned with, but only reasoned about. It cannot even be adequately symbolized, for regarding it as a mental image, a pictured thought is only a more refined form of idol-worship. It can only be designated. The true Godhead is unconditioned, formless, not picturable. No individual worship can reach what is utterly beyond all individual existence. No name can be given that will properly stand for what is without attributes and without limitations.

In the ultimate reality there are and can be no distinctions and no differences, no grades and no change.

But because causation is shown to be illusory, and the cosmos uncreated and unending, this does not mean that our cosmology denies the truth of evolution. It denies only the conventional attitude towards evolution. For it takes all change and hence all progress out of the realm of ultimate reality and relegates them to where they belong, to the realm of immediate appearance.

The Creative Energy is one and the same no matter how high or how low may be the level upon which it manifests and how refined or how gross the form through which it expresses itself.

Ultimate reality does not lie in this world, nor in that which perceives it, but in that which perceives the perceiver.

If, remembering the infinitude of the Ultimate Reality, we refuse to personify it and refuse to worship such a personification, we lift ourselves from the exclusively religious to the integrally religio-mystical-philosophic standpoint.

The ultimate reality cannot be represented with any fidelity nor can the ultimate truth be communicated with any accuracy.

The ultimate truth refers to the essence of a thing, its real nature. The immediate truth refers to its shifting conditions or passing states, the thing as it appears at the moment of perception.

Those who decline to search for ultimate truth because they believe it to be unattainable, because they despair of ever finding it, betray it.

To say that the ultimate Reality is utterly unknowable is quite correct from the standpoint of the actual human situation involving ordinary and familiar instruments of knowledge, namely, the body's senses and the mind's reasonings. But it is not quite correct from the standpoint of possible human attainment. What neither sense nor intellect can find, a third and higher faculty, now latent, may find. This is the faculty of insight.

*As an extension to the texts presented here, we recommend reading (in the ARTICLES section) the document **A231220** *Where do we stand: Is the world real or illusory?...* where you will find some more notes by Paul Brunton, but also others by Ramana Maharshi.*