



1.1. Misconceptions About Mystical Experiences

When people first hear about mystical experiences, they often seem like something unreal - phenomena arising in a kind of trance state in which all sorts of things can be imagined or perceived.

In reality, however, mystical experiences are exactly the opposite:

They are an awakening to reality.

If we examine ordinary consciousness, we find that we are often in a trance-like state.

Most of the time, our awareness is caught up in an inner world of thoughts and images, and only partially connected to the direct perception of reality.

We may claim that our thoughts and ideas are based on reality, but ultimately they are mental constructs - thoughts and images that can be far removed from what is actually real.

A film about a river is not a river. It remains a film - something we can alter at will, without the river itself ever changing.

Mysticism, therefore, begins with stepping out of the world of thoughts and images and becoming consciously aware of physical reality.

From my perspective, any path that omits this step cannot truly be considered mysticism.

Such approaches might be called esoteric or trance-based methods, but not true mysticism.

What appears mysterious to those unfamiliar with mysticism is that, in its second step, mysticism opens to spiritual reality.

This realm remains hidden to ordinary people, which is why reports of mystical experiences often seem unreal to them.

The mystical path, however, leads to the experience of reality - both physical and spiritual.

Prayer and the World of Thought

Even the life of faith and the prayers of many religious people often take place predominantly in the world of thoughts and images.

In this inner space, religious ideas and emotions can be generated - but they do not necessarily have a connection to spiritual reality.

What is a Trance State?

A characteristic of a trance state is the focus on a particular element, while other aspects are faded out.

The crucial question in mysticism is whether consciousness is anchored in the inner world of thoughts and images or in perceptible reality.

An example: One might ask someone, "What color is your breath?" To answer this question, one would have to enter a trance state, because no one can perceive the color of their breath in reality. That is pure imagination.

This does not mean that trance states are bad.

They have their place and can be used very effectively, for example in psychotherapy. But they have nothing to do with true mystical practice. In reality, we can perceive the movement of the chest - but not see any color.

Being able to distinguish between the two is extremely important.

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