



# **The Revolution of the Mind**

*A Philosophy and Metaphysics for the Awakening Self*

David Ramirez

May 2026

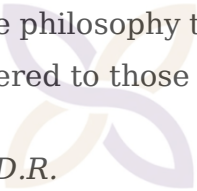
## **Preface**

I have been working a discipline for nine years. Every day, or nearly every day, I have written down what I have come to see. The accumulated lines now number nearly two thousand. They are the raw material. This document is one attempt to organize them into a stated worldview, to set down, in connected prose, what I have come to believe is true, and what follows from believing it.

I make no claim to originality. The metaphysics I describe here is older than every name we have for it. It is in the Upanishads. It is in the Tao Te Ching. It is in the Christian mystics, the Sufis, the contemplative Jews, and the Buddhists of every lineage. What I have done is the work of every honest seeker: I have walked into the room, looked around, and reported what I saw, in my own words, with my own life as the evidence.

The philosophy that follows is not a system to be argued. It is a way of seeing, offered to those who suspect there is more to be seen.

— *D.R.*  
May 2026

 DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

# Contents

## **PART ONE, THE METAPHYSICS**

- § 1 A Preliminary Note
- § 2 The Source
- § 3 On Consciousness
- § 4 Vibration and Form
- § 5 The Observer and the Observed
- § 6 The Illusion of Separation
- § 7 The Necessity of Opposition
- § 8 Reality as Play
- § 9 Free Will and the Convergence Principle
- § 10 Karma, A Restatement
- § 11 Death

## **PART TWO, THE PHILOSOPHY**

- § 12 The Egoless Origin
- § 13 The Charge
- § 14 The Witness
- § 15 The Practice of Letting Go
- § 16 The Five Apertures
- § 17 The Awakening
- § 18 Harmony
- § 19 Compassion as Default
- § 20 Sovereignty and Surrender
- § 21 The Way of Action
- § 22 What This Is For

## **CLOSING**

- Closing Note

PART ONE

# **The Metaphysics**



*On the Nature of What Is*



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 1

## **A Preliminary Note**

---

A philosophy without a metaphysics is a set of recommendations no one is required to follow. A metaphysics without a philosophy is a description of reality that does not bother to ask what we should do about it. Most of the work that has shaped me has held both. I will hold both here.

I begin with the metaphysics because the philosophy follows from it. What we believe to be true about the nature of reality determines what we take to be wise behavior within it. If we believe ourselves to be separate selves in a hostile universe, we will live one way. If we believe ourselves to be differentiated expressions of a unified source, we will live another way. The choice between these two is not made by argument. It is made by seeing.

I do not expect anyone to accept what follows on my word. I expect what follows to be testable in our own experience. The metaphysical claims I make should, if true, predict the kind of life we actually live when we act on them. If they do not, the claims are wrong. If they do, the claims are pointing at something worth looking at.

A note on vocabulary. I will use words that are familiar to anyone who has spent time with contemplative traditions, but I will use them plainly. The Source. The witness. The awakening. The mask. The charge. The aperture. These are not technical terms. They are the simplest words I can find for what I mean.

A final note on what this document is. It is not a creed. The Divine Karma Institute does not require its practitioners to believe what I write here. It only requires honesty about what one does believe, and an openness to letting that change. This document is my honest attempt to set down what I have come to see.

*Man's greatest suffering lies in the pursuit of answers he refuses to find within himself.*

— Posted 2025



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 2

## **The Source**

---

I will begin with the claim the rest of the metaphysics depends on.

There is one. There is not many. The appearance of many is the work of perception, yours, mine, and the universe's. Beneath the appearance runs a single current, a single substrate, a single ground. I call it the Source.

I do not mean a personal God. I do not mean a creator who sits outside the creation and judges it. I do not mean the deity of any particular religion, though every religion, in its sincerest moments, is trying to point at the same thing. The Source has no shape, no opinion, no biography. It is what is. It is the silence beneath every sound, the stillness beneath every motion, the awareness beneath every thought.

I am not separate from the Source. You are not separate from the Source. The tree outside the window is not separate from the Source. We are the Source, having taken form. The wave does not stand apart from the ocean. The flame does not stand apart from the fire. You and I do not stand apart from the one. We are how the one knows itself in this particular shape, on this particular day, with these particular eyes.

This is the deepest claim I will make in this document. Everything else extends from it. If it is true, then the fear of separation is the fear of something that was never the case. If it is true, then compassion is not a moral instruction but the natural posture of anything that has remembered. If it is true, then death is not the end of a self but the return of a borrowed form. If it is true, then a hundred apparent disagreements collapse into a single misunderstanding.

I cannot prove this. No one can. The proof, if there is one, is in what we become when we take it seriously. I have taken it seriously. I have become

more peaceful, more compassionate, more able to lose things without breaking. I am offering what I found. Try it on. See if it fits the shape of our own lives.

| *Separateness is a concept which lives in your mind.*

— Posted April 5, 2026



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 3

## On Consciousness

---

Some tenets, gathered in one place.

The metaphysics so far has spoken of the Source. I want now to be explicit about how consciousness fits into that picture, since the word "consciousness" will be doing a great deal of work in the pages to come. Here are the main tenets of how I am using it.

First. Consciousness is how the Source knows itself. Consciousness is not produced by the brain. The brain produces a localized perspective, a vantage point from which the Source can encounter its own existence in a particular shape. But consciousness itself is older than any brain, older than any form. Consciousness is primary. Brains are the instruments through which it is focused.

Second. Consciousness requires differentiation. A perfectly unified, undivided field cannot know itself. There is no inside and outside, no perceiver and perceived, no self and other. For the Source to become aware, it must appear to itself as if it were many. The appearance of separation, into forms, into selves, into observers and observed, is what permits awareness at all.

Third. Consciousness requires opposition. Differentiation alone is not sufficient. Awareness requires contrast. A self needs a not-self, something to push against, something to define itself in relation to. This is why friction and adversity are not regrettable accidents of existence. They are what allow consciousness to come into focus. The yin and yang of section seven is the same claim at the level of metaphor.

Fourth. Consciousness evolves through what it experiences. Each encounter leaves a residue. Each experience is metabolized and added to what the Source has come to know through that form. This is how consciousness grows.

Not by accumulating new content, but by deepening its acquaintance with itself.

Fifth. Consciousness moves through stages. Within an individual form, consciousness develops along a recognizable path. The Innocence of arrival. The Ignorance of the constructed self. The Awakening of recognition. The Ambivalence of equanimity. These four stages are the spine of the Central Thesis and the territory walked through in detail in Part Two of this treatise. They are not theory. They are the shape of every life that allows itself to be looked at honestly.

Sixth. Consciousness is not bounded by the form it inhabits. Although consciousness expresses through a body and a personality, it is not contained in them. When the form dissolves, consciousness does not go anywhere. It was never localized to begin with. This is what is meant by saying we are not the body. The body is where consciousness happens to be focused in this moment.

Seventh. Consciousness is co-creative. Perception participates in what is perceived. The world we experience is partly what we bring to it. We are not passive recipients of an external reality. We are active partners in its arising. The reframing that section five develops in detail begins here.

Eighth. Consciousness can observe itself. The witness, that faculty of awareness which can notice without becoming what it notices, is the central instrument of every contemplative tradition. We do not need to leave consciousness to study it. Consciousness can turn to look at itself. This recursion is the practice.

Ninth, and most important. Consciousness is one. Beneath the apparent diversity of conscious beings runs a single field. We are not separate consciousnesses inhabiting separate bodies. We are differentiated perspectives of one consciousness, encountering itself through countless forms at once.

It is worth noting that this view of consciousness is not eccentric. It appears, in slightly different language, across most of the world's contemplative traditions. The Vedanta of India describes consciousness as the underlying substrate, not the byproduct, of all that is. The Hermetic tradition of the Mediterranean said the same in different words. Modern consciousness research, particularly the work that emerged from the Monroe Institute in the late twentieth century, arrived at remarkably similar conclusions through entirely different methods.

Of particular interest, and worth naming, is a declassified document sometimes called the Gateway Report. In 1983, the United States Army commissioned an internal assessment of the Monroe Institute's work on altered states of consciousness. What the assessing officer wrote, in what is now the recovered Page 25 of that document, is striking. The universe, the report proposes, is composed of energy fields. Everything we encounter, matter, space, time, and thought, is ultimately a manifestation of energy vibrating at different frequencies. Consciousness itself is described as an organized pattern of energy, a coherent oscillating field generated through the interaction of brain and mind. The brain is not the source of consciousness but a receiver and a tuner, focusing what is already there. Under sufficiently coherent conditions, consciousness can move beyond ordinary perceptions of space and time and interact with what the report calls the Absolute, a universal field of information. Individual awareness, in this model, is a localized expression of that larger field.

Whether or not the specific mechanism the Gateway Report proposes is correct in every detail, the model it points at is the same model the contemplative traditions have pointed at for thousands of years, and the same model this treatise is developing. The institutional provenance of the report is itself worth noting. This was not a metaphysician's essay. It was a military intelligence assessment, written by people whose job was to be skeptical of unverifiable claims, and they nevertheless concluded that the model deserved serious consideration.

Mainstream neuroscience, fairly, has not yet validated this view, and the working hypothesis in most academic departments remains that the brain produces consciousness. I do not dismiss that view. I observe that it has not yet explained the experience of consciousness from the inside, and I observe further that the inside view, when reported honestly across cultures and centuries, has been remarkably consistent. The metaphysics this work is developing is the metaphysics of that inside view.

If these tenets are taken seriously, the rest of the treatise follows. If they are not taken seriously, the treatise is at most a collection of interesting sentences. The choice is the reader's.

*The Source becomes a person, briefly, in order to know itself as a person.*

— Synthesized from the corpus



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 4

## Vibration and Form

---

The Source is not still. It is not solid. It does not sit. It vibrates.

What we call "things" are patterns in the Source. The body we experience as solid is mostly empty space, and the small amount that is not empty is itself patterns of energy held in relationships. Look closely enough at any "thing" and the thingness disappears. There are no objects in the universe in the way most people imagine them. There are only relationships, vibrating at frequencies, holding themselves in stable configurations long enough to be perceived.

This is not mysticism. This is physics. The mysticism is what we make of it.

What we make of it, I think, is this: everything we encounter is energy interpreted. Including us. The body we call ours is a pattern stable enough to last the human lifespan. The personality we call ours is a pattern stable enough to last most situations. The "self" we call ours is the pattern of the patterns, the song the various frequencies happen to be singing together right now.

But songs end. The patterns dissolve and reform. The body we have today did not exist twenty years ago, most of its atoms have been replaced, and yet we feel continuous. The continuity is itself a pattern. It is a beautiful one. It is the one we are most invested in.

When I say that we are forms of energy vibrating at a certain frequency, interpreted by those who are observing us, I am not waving my hands. I am pointing at a fact about how matter works, and following it where it leads. Where it leads is to the recognition that what we have called the self is not what we thought it was, and what we have called the world is not what we

thought it was, and the two of them, self and world, are not as different as we thought they were.

Close your eyes and the sun still shines. Nothing exists until you open your eyes.

— Posted March 3, 2017



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 5

## **The Observer and the Observed**

---

You cannot have an experience without there being someone having it. You cannot have a someone without there being something they are perceiving. The two are coemergent. They do not exist independently. They come up together.

This is the strangest claim of the metaphysics, because it cuts against everything common sense tells us about how perception works. Common sense says: there is a world out there, and there is a self in here, and the self looks at the world. The world is one thing; the self is another; the looking connects them.

The metaphysics I am describing says: there is no separate world out there, and there is no separate self in here. There is only the looking. Every act of perception is the Source perceiving itself, through a particular form, in a particular moment. The "world" is what shows up. The "self" is what is doing the showing up. Neither one exists without the other.

We can test this. Try to find the self that is having our experience right now. Look for it. Not metaphorically, actually look. We will find sensations. We will find thoughts. We will find the awareness of sensations and thoughts. We will not find a separate self that is having them. The "I" we take for granted is a useful inference, not a perceived thing.

The same goes for the world. The "world" we take for granted is our nervous system's best interpretation of patterns of energy striking our sensory apparatus. The world we experience is not the world. It is our interpretation of it. The world we experience is ours.

This is liberating, not destabilizing. It means that the suffering that occurs in our experience is happening in something that is not quite as solid as it

appears. It means that the patterns can change. It means that the way we perceive shapes what we perceive.

*Your experiences are not happening to you, they're happening because of you. This allows you to become the witness to your creation.*

— Posted 2021



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 6

## The Illusion of Separation

---

If the Source is one, and if perception is the Source perceiving itself, then the apparent separation between any one of us and another is not a metaphysical fact. It is an effect of perspective.

We are taught the opposite from the beginning. We are taught that there are bodies, and bodies are separate, and inside each body there is a person, and the persons are separate, and what one person feels has nothing essential to do with what another person feels. We rehearse this teaching every day, in every interaction, until we forget it is a teaching at all and mistake it for the structure of reality.

It is not. It is a useful approximation, the way "the earth is flat" is a useful approximation for someone laying tile. It works at the scale of daily life. It fails at every deeper scale.

If we are differentiated expressions of one Source, then what we do to another, we do to ourselves, not metaphorically, but in the most literal possible sense. The Source is what we all are. The form is what makes us appear different. The form is also what tricks us into thinking we are separate enough that one of us can prosper at the other's expense.

This is the metaphysical ground of every ethics worth the name. It is why every contemplative tradition arrives at compassion not as a discipline but as a relief. The relief is the relief of stopping the fight against what is true. To recognize that the other is not other is to put down a weight one did not know one was carrying.

The illusion of separation is not stupid. It is functional. It allows civilizations to organize, languages to develop, and individual lives to mean something. But when it becomes the only frame, it becomes the prison.

*In recognizing our own greatness, we do not rise above others.  
Instead, we dissolve the very boundaries that once convinced us we  
were different.*

— Posted April 12, 2026



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 7

## **The Necessity of Opposition**

---

There is a question I have not yet answered. If we are all expressions of one Source, and if separation is an illusion, why does the illusion exist at all? Why has the Source not simply remained whole, undivided, untroubled?

The answer, I think, is that consciousness cannot become aware of itself without opposition. A mind in a vacuum has nothing to know itself against. Self-awareness requires a not-self to push against, something that, at first glance, seems to be other. The ancient symbol for this is yin and yang: two opposites embracing, neither complete without the other, the boundary between them not a wall but a curve that holds them in motion.

This is how consciousness grows. Through friction. Through adversity. Through encounter with what feels foreign and resistant. We learn from what is difficult. We do not learn, in any deep way, from a life that gives us only what we want.

If existence were entirely utopian, if there were no obstacle, no challenge, no suffering, there would also be no evolution. Nothing would press against the form long enough to change it. The same is true of an entirely dystopian existence: relentless suffering with no relief becomes its own kind of stasis, a flatness without contrast. Consciousness evolves not in the absence of opposition but through its alternation, the rhythm of joy and grief, gain and loss, harmony and discord, and the slow accumulation of what is learned in each turn.

There are moments, however, when the game is over. Like a chess match in which the outcome is already determined many moves in advance, a life or a system can reach a point where no new move can change what is coming. In those moments, the slate is wiped clean. *Tabula rasa*. The board is reset.

Something begins again, fresh, with the lessons of the previous arrangement quietly retained at a level beneath memory. This is not failure. This is how a Source learns at the largest scale.

The opposition we encounter, the people who disagree with us, the events that wound us, the years that disappoint us, is not the proof that something has gone wrong. It is the medium through which the Source comes to know itself. Knowing this does not make any of it less painful. It makes it bearable, and sometimes meaningful, and occasionally beautiful.

— *Conflict is the medium through which consciousness sees itself.*

— *Without opposition, the Source would never know what it is.*

— Synthesized from the corpus



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 8

## **Reality as Play**

---

If perception co-creates what is perceived, and if the self is a pattern rather than a substance, and if separation is an interpretation rather than a fact, then what is reality?

I have come to think of it as a play. Not in the cynical sense, where everything is fake and nothing matters. In the participatory sense, where everyone is playing a role, and the playing is the reality, and the role and the player are the same thing while the play is happening.

When I look at the people around me, I see this everywhere. Each of us has chosen a character, not deliberately, mostly, but choices were made, and we have settled into them. The character has preferences, has a past, has things it would never do and things it most wants. We invest in the character. We defend it. Over decades we dig the hole of that character deeper, until we cannot see over the edge of it, and we mistake the hole for the world.

Other people are playing their characters too. We meet each other across the holes we have dug. Most of our conflicts are between characters, not between people. The character "father" argues with the character "son," and neither of them notices that the same Source is on both sides of the argument, wearing two different masks.

I am not saying we should stop playing. The playing is what life is. I am saying that to know it is a play, even while playing it, changes everything about how it is played. We can act fully in our role without believing our role is the whole of us. We can love our character without becoming it. We can put it down when the play is over, and recognize that what we were always was the actor, not the part.

This is one of the great gifts of awakening. The play continues. But the grip releases.

*The ego thrives on a selfish belief that it has to convince others of its uniqueness.*

— Posted April 21, 2026



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 9

## Free Will and the Convergence Principle

---

The metaphysics so far has described a Source perceiving itself through forms, the necessity of opposition for awareness, and reality as a participatory play. A reasonable question follows. Are we free to choose how the play unfolds, or is the outcome already written?

I have come to believe that the question is wrongly posed. The honest answer is that both are true, and that the apparent contradiction dissolves once we see what kind of thing is fixed and what kind of thing is free.

The principle, stated plainly: free will determines the path. The destination tends to converge.

Different roads lead to similar arrivals. Different decisions produce recognizable lives. The same lessons keep returning, sometimes dressed in different clothes, until the form has learned what it was placed in motion to learn. This is not a failure of agency. It is the structure of how a Source teaches itself through a particular life.

Quantum mechanics offers the cleanest mathematical analogy for what is happening. In the path-integral formulation of quantum mechanics, a particle does not take one path from point A to point B. It takes all possible paths at once, and the actual observed trajectory is the sum of those paths, interfering, cancelling, reinforcing, until they collapse into the single classical outcome we record. The path is plural at the small scale. The destination is singular at the large scale. The micro is open. The macro converges.

Lives behave the same way. At every moment, we have genuine choice. We can take any action, however small. The local sovereignty of the form to make a different move than the one the pattern predicts is real, and it matters. But the long arc of a life is not local. It is the integration of millions of small

choices, made by a particular self with a particular pattern, in response to a particular world. That integration converges. The destination is the sum.

What does this mean in practice?

It means that the choice in front of us, almost always, does not determine where we are going. We are already going there. The choice determines the quality of the road. The texture. The dignity. The amount of unnecessary suffering. The alignment between who we are and what we are doing.

Most decisions are what we might call high convergence. The available paths all land us in roughly the same place. We agonize over them as if they were forks in destiny, but they are forks in experience. To recognize this is enormously freeing. It releases the gripping that turns ordinary choices into existential weight.

Some decisions are low convergence. They are genuine forks, where the paths diverge widely enough that the destination is actually in play. These deserve careful attention. The metaphysics does not deny them. It only says they are less common than the ego believes.

This is what the Stoics meant when they distinguished between what is up to us and what is not. The world unfolds; we choose how to walk through it. This is what Spinoza meant when he said freedom is the adequate understanding of one's own determination. This is what the karmic traditions meant when they spoke of liberation as the terminus of countless particular paths. The Convergence Principle is the same principle in plainer language.

It is also the practical consequence of everything else this treatise has been developing. If the Source is one, and if every form is the Source coming to know itself, then the destination of each form is the deepening of that self-knowledge. The path is variable. The arrival is not.

The lived consequence is a particular kind of peace. We stop fighting the river. We stop dramatizing every decision as if our entire future hinged on it. We

start to attend, instead, to the smaller and more important question of whether the road we are walking is the road that does justice to what we are. Freedom relocates. From the destination, where it never had as much purchase as we wanted to believe, to the path, where it has more than we usually use.

| *Choose the road. The arrival will arrive.*

— The Convergence Principle, Divine Karma Institute



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 10

## Karma, A Restatement

---

The word "karma" carries a great deal of baggage. In its most common Western usage, it has come to mean a kind of cosmic accounting system, we did something bad, so something bad will happen to us, which has very little to do with what the word originally meant or with what I mean by it.

I think of karma as a pendulum. We apply force in one direction; the pendulum returns with equal force in the other. We push it again; it swings again. So long as we keep pushing, investing energy in our experiences, in our identities, in the stories we are telling about both, the pendulum continues to swing. It is the lawful return of energy to its source. It is not punishment. It is closer to physics than to morality.

When we stop pushing, the pendulum begins to slow. Not all at once, the accumulated momentum of a lifetime of pushing does not dissipate in a day, but it begins. Each swing is slightly smaller than the one before. Eventually, if we maintain the discipline of not adding new force, the pendulum comes to rest at center. That center is what the philosophy is pointing at. The state of equilibrium. The end of the swinging. What we have been calling Ambivalence.

This is karma in the truest sense: not punishment, not reward, but the lawful continuation of pattern, and the lawful return to stillness when the pattern is no longer fed. If we are angry today, we have pushed the pendulum in the direction of anger; tomorrow it will swing back to us, and we will mistake the swing for fresh provocation. If we are gentle today, we have pushed in the direction of gentleness, and the pendulum returns there as well. The mechanism is morally neutral. It is descriptive. It is how identity is made, and how identity is unmade.

There is a second motion to the pendulum that deserves naming. It does not only return what we push. It also draws toward us what resonates with the push. The force with which we throw energy outward is the same force that pulls like energy back toward us. Anger attracts the conditions of anger. Gentleness attracts the conditions of gentleness. The strength of the attraction is proportional to the strength of the original investment. This is sometimes called the law of attraction. It is not a separate law from karma. It is the same lawful motion seen from the other side.

I call my work Divine Karma because I want to name two things at once. First, the mechanism: karma as the pendulum we have been pushing for so long that we have forgotten we were pushing it. Second, the possibility: that the pendulum can be allowed to slow. The same mechanism that builds prisons can be allowed to build stillness. Stillness is not the absence of motion. It is what motion settles into when nothing is being added to it.

The Institute's central practice is to learn to stop pushing. To take what we have built into ourselves and, through the practice of letting go, allow the pendulum to come to rest. To let the pattern soften enough that the Source can be felt again beneath it.

| *If we are to heal, we must first learn to let go.*

— Posted 2021

§ 11

## Death

---

A metaphysics is not complete without an account of death. Most philosophies handle it badly. They either deny it (the immortal soul that does not really die) or capitulate to it (annihilation, the end, nothing further). I think both miss what is actually happening.

Death is the end of a form. The form is the body, the personality, the biography, the network of relationships, the patterns of attention and reaction that constituted "this person" for the span of a life. All of that ends. To pretend otherwise is to lie to the dying.

But death is not the end of the Source. The Source does not begin and end with any particular form. The Source is what was here before the form arose, what is here while the form persists, and what will be here when the form dissolves. To die is to return what was borrowed.

This is not a story I tell to be comforted. It is what the metaphysics requires, given what I have already said. If we are differentiated expressions of one Source, then dying is the redifferentiation. The form returns. What animated it does not "go" anywhere, it was never localized to begin with.

I have sat with the dying. I have watched the moment of release. There is, in many deaths, a recognizable softening at the end, a settling, a letting go, a kind of remembering. I am not making metaphysical claims out of one or two observed deaths. I am saying that the metaphysics I am describing is consistent with what is actually observed in that moment, and most other metaphysical systems are not.

The death process is one of the five apertures I will describe in Part Two. It is the most reliable of them. The ego, faced with its own dissolution, cannot maintain itself indefinitely. Something else comes forward. Whether the

person was prepared for it or not, the borrowed face is taken back, and what remains is what was always there.

| *The mind wants to hold on, but the heart knows to let go.*

— Posted 2026



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

PART TWO

# **The Philosophy**



*On How to Live Within It*



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 12

## The Egoless Origin

---

We are born without an ego. This is not a romantic claim. It is an observable one. The newborn does not have opinions, does not maintain a self-image, does not strategize, does not perform. The newborn is awareness incarnate, taking in everything, attached to nothing, perfectly itself.

What happens after birth is the slow construction of the ego. The infant learns that some behaviors elicit comfort and others elicit withdrawal. The child learns that some statements are praised and others punished. The young person learns that some identities are available and others are foreclosed. Over the course of a childhood, a mask is built, gradually, in response to the demands of the environment.

The mask is not a mistake. The mask is the first tool. We need it. We could not survive without it. To navigate human society requires a face, a face that other faces can recognize, predict, and relate to. The face is the ego. The ego is the face.

The mistake, if there is one, is forgetting that the mask was put on. We come to identify with it so completely that we believe it is who we are. We defend it as if our life depended on it. In a sense it does: the life we know, the life we have built, depends on the continuation of this particular mask. But the life we do not know, the life beneath the mask, has nothing to do with the mask at all.

This is why the philosophy I am offering is not about destroying the ego. It is about remembering that the ego was acquired. Once that is remembered, the ego becomes a tool again, rather than a tyrant.

| *You can not attain greatness, because you've always had it.*

— Posted March 2017

§ 13

## The Charge

---

Emotion is innate. Attachment is not.

This is one of the most important distinctions in the philosophy I am describing, and it is one that gets routinely confused. When I speak of letting go of attachment, I do not mean letting go of emotion. To live without emotion would be to live as a corpse. Emotion is the body speaking. It carries information. It deserves attention.

Attachment is something else. Attachment is when emotion adheres to a particular memory, a particular identity, a particular story about what happened and what it meant, and refuses to let go. The same event, witnessed by two people, leaves two different residues. The event is not the difference. The interpretation, and the attachment to the interpretation, is the difference.

I call this residue the charge.

The charge is what we accumulate over a lifetime when we do not know how to release it. A small humiliation in childhood becomes, in adulthood, a hair trigger reaction to a particular kind of slight. A loss that was never grieved becomes, decades later, an inability to fully love. The events are long gone. The charge remains.

The work of the philosophy I am describing is the work of recognizing the charge and releasing it. Not the emotion, the charge. The emotion comes and goes. The charge sits. Over years it sits more heavily, until we feel like we cannot move under the weight of it.

We mistake the charge for the self. We say "this is just who I am" about reactions that are nothing of the kind, they are accumulated residue. They are removable. They are not us.

This is the central practical claim of the philosophy: what we carry is not what we are. What we carry can be set down. The setting down is a learnable skill.

| *You are free only when you let go of the things you cling to.*

— Posted 2018



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 14

## The Witness

---

To release the charge, one must first see it. To see it, one must develop the witness.

The witness is the faculty within us that can observe without being captured. It is not a special part of us; it is not located anywhere in the body; it does not require belief in anything. It is awareness, noticing itself, while everything else continues.

We have already met the witness. Anyone who has ever been angry and known they were being angry has met the witness. Anyone who has cried and watched themselves cry has met the witness. The witness is the part of us that is reading these words while the rest of us is reacting to them.

The witness is not a separate self. It is awareness without identification. When the witness is active, we can have an experience without becoming it. The experience continues; the identification softens; the charge has somewhere to go that is not "us."

There are two complementary practices that bring the witness alive in us.

The first is awareness, the ongoing practice of noticing, in real time, what is arising. Sitting meditation trains this. Journaling trains this. Conversation with someone who can reflect what they see trains this. The Observer Engine module of the Institute's platform trains this. None of these is special. All of them work. The discipline is consistent attention, noticing what arises, noticing oneself noticing, noticing oneself noticing the noticing, until the whole stack relaxes into simple awareness.

The second is contemplation of self, sitting with oneself as before a mirror, and looking honestly at what is there. The mirror does not judge. It does not

interpret. It does not improve. It returns the image as it is. To contemplate oneself this way is to refuse the impulse to fix what is reflected. To see oneself as one is, without rushing to praise or condemn, is to develop the witness from another direction. Awareness watches the river as it flows. Contemplation looks at the riverbed. Together they are the two hands of the same work.

The witness does not do anything dramatic. It does not enlighten us. It does not solve our problems. What it does is make the next move possible. With the witness in place, we can begin to release.

| *Awaken your mind and you will discover your wings.*

— Posted 2020



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 15

## The Practice of Letting Go

---

Before any release can happen, we must do the hardest part. We must acknowledge what we are carrying. This is the first step, and it is the same first step that anyone who has ever walked into Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, or any other twelve step program has had to take. The form is simple. I have this. I am the one who has this. I can no longer pretend otherwise.

The acknowledgment matters because attachment hides. It dresses itself as identity, as preference, as principle, as personality. It says, I am not the addiction, the trauma, the resentment. I just have it, or it just is, or it is someone else's fault. As long as the attachment can hide, no release is possible. To call it out is to point at it. To point at it is to deny it the protection of remaining unnamed.

Once named, the attachment cannot continue to operate in the dark. Then, and only then, can the work of self-autolysis begin.

I owe much to Robert Scheinfeld for the framing I will use in this section. His term, self-autolysis, captures the practice better than any other I have encountered. Autolysis is the biological process by which a cell, when it is no longer useful, dissolves itself from within. Self-autolysis is the analogous psychological process: the deliberate dissolution of the energy a self has invested in particular experiences, identities, and stories.

The practice is not complicated to describe. The challenge is not in the description; it is in the doing.

It begins with attention. We bring the witness to a specific charge, a particular memory, a particular reaction, a particular identification that we can feel is

heavy. We do not analyze it. We do not strategize about it. We simply attend to it, fully, without trying to change it.

What we find, if we are patient, is that the charge is not as solid as it appears. It is held together by our continued investment in it, by the story we are telling about it, by the meaning we are giving it, by the part of our identity that depends on it being there. When we stop investing, the charge softens. When we stop investing entirely, the charge dissolves.

This is not the same as suppression. Suppression hides the charge. Self-autolysis releases it. The difference is felt: after suppression, the charge is still there, just hidden. After release, the charge is actually gone. The memory remains. The grip does not.

I will not pretend this is easy. Some charges have been with us for decades. Some are bound up with our deepest sense of who we are. To release them feels like dying. In a sense it is, the self that was held together by the charge will not survive its release. Something else will come forward. What comes forward is closer to who we always were.

The practice is daily. It is iterative. It is not a one-time event. Over months and years, the cumulative effect is the gradual softening of the prison the charge had built. The walls become more transparent. Eventually, in some cases, they become impossible to find.

*Liberation is reaching a point in your life when you no longer want to carry the burdens of attachments that have weighed you down.*

— Posted 2021

§ 16

## **The Five Apertures**

---

Most of the time, the ego maintains itself successfully. The charge stays where it is. The mask stays in place. Life continues, in the usual way, with the usual burdens.

But there are moments when the ego cannot maintain itself. I call these the apertures. There are five of them.

The first is trauma. A traumatic event is, by definition, an event that the ordinary self could not metabolize. The ego is overwhelmed. Its usual structures of coping fail. In the failure, there is an opening, a moment when the ordinary self is not running the show, and something else can be glimpsed. Trauma is often described, accurately, as shattering. What shatters is the ego. What can be seen, briefly, in the broken places, is what was always beneath.

The second is emotional distress. Less acute than trauma but more sustained. The slow grinding of grief, of betrayal, of an unmanageable life. In sustained distress, the ego's resources are exhausted. It can no longer maintain its performance. It opens, sometimes, to something larger that has been waiting.

The third is the middle of life. What we call the midlife crisis is the moment when the borrowed story we have been living begins to run thin. The career, the family, the identity, the things we were told would make a life, turn out to be either insufficient or untrue. The ego cannot maintain its narrative. It loosens. In the loosening, the question arises: if not this, then what? If not me-as-I-have-been, then who?

The fourth is the death process. The most reliable aperture. Faced with its own dissolution, the ego cannot maintain itself indefinitely. Something else comes forward. The borrowed face is returned. What remains is what was always there.

The fifth is the path of deliberate practice. Unlike the other four, this aperture is not given to us by circumstance. It is opened by the practitioner themselves, through sustained and disciplined effort. Long hours of meditation. Years of prayer. Periods of isolation and silence. Sensory deprivation. Fasts. Vows of simplicity. Acts of conscious sacrifice. These practices are not punishments and they are not bargaining chips with the universe. They are deliberate constrictions that wear the ego thin by depriving it of the constant stimulation it needs to maintain itself. For some practitioners, the fifth aperture is the only one they can rely on, because the other four arrive at the timing of life rather than the timing of will. The fifth requires many years for most, decades for some. But unlike the other four, it is always available to anyone willing to do the work.

I do not romanticize any of these. Each of them is, in the moment of its occurrence, painful or demanding. But the philosophy I am describing requires that we recognize them for what they are: not failures, not punishments, but openings. The ego's hold loosens. The witness has more room to operate. The work of letting go becomes, briefly, much easier.

For those of us who are not currently in an aperture, the practice is to build the witness and the release work into ordinary life, so that when an aperture comes, and one will, we are ready.

*Transformation begins with destruction of the old, to create room for the new.*

— Posted 2024

§ 17

## **The Awakening**

---

The Awakening is what happens when the witness becomes strong enough, the charges have been sufficiently released, and the ego has been sufficiently seen through, that ambivalence to control becomes the default state.

This is not a flashy event. It can happen suddenly, in some cases, there are recorded instances of sudden, dramatic awakenings, and I do not doubt them, but for most people, the awakening arrives slowly. So slowly that it can be lived through without being noticed.

What changes? Less than the mythology suggests. The world looks the same. The body still has needs. The mind still has thoughts. Other people still behave as they do. None of that is altered. D. T. Suzuki, the Japanese philosopher and religious scholar who brought Zen to the West, put it best, in the most famous line ever spoken on the subject: "Enlightenment is like everyday consciousness but two inches above the ground." The two inches are everything.

What is altered is the relationship to all of it. The compulsion to control experience softens. The need to defend the ego against its perceived enemies recedes. The willingness to let things be what they are deepens. Compassion, which had been an effort, becomes easier. Anxiety, which had been the air, becomes occasional. The grip releases.

This is what I mean by ambivalence to control. Not apathy. Not passivity. Not indifference to outcomes. The awakened person still acts, still cares, still loves. They simply act, care, and love without the desperate clutching that used to accompany every action. They are, in a precise sense, freer.

There is a distinction worth naming here. To believe is built on hope. Faith is knowing. Most of what we call "spiritual belief" is, in truth, hope dressed up

as conviction, we hope that we are more than we appear, we hope that meaning exists, we hope that something larger holds us. Hope is not nothing. It is the door we walk through. But it is not the room on the other side. Faith arrives when the hoping is no longer necessary, because what was hoped for is now seen. The awakened state is precisely this transition: from hoping and defending to knowing and resting. We no longer have to believe in the Source. We have come to feel ourselves to be it.

I will not claim to be fully awakened. I will claim to have noticed that the people I most respect, the contemplative teachers I have learned from, and the writers whose work has shaped me, all describe the same shift, in roughly the same terms. The shift is real. It is achievable. It is not a special privilege reserved for monks. It is available, in some measure, to anyone who does the work.

The Awakening is not the end of the journey. There is no end. There is only the deepening, the slow continued release of charge, the slow continued softening of the mask, the slow continued return to what we always were. The journey continues until the body returns to the Source. After that, who knows. The metaphysics I have described suggests there is no further journey, only the return of the wave to the ocean it never left.

*Today will be the beginning of a new chapter of your life, or it can be doing the same thing you did yesterday.*

— Posted 2023

§ 18

## Harmony

---

A word about harmony.

Harmony, in the sense I am pointing at, is not the absence of conflict, or the agreement of all parties. It is a state of being available to those who have practiced long enough that awareness of self and awareness of experience are continuous, and undisturbed.

The harmonious self is aware of what is rising in them. The harmonious self is aware of what is rising around them. And the harmonious self does not try to change or control either. Not because they are passive, but because they have learned that the control was the cause of the disturbance in the first place.

From this state, two things happen. The first is that they resonate with what they are attracting. Their actions, their words, and their presence align with the energy they are calling to themselves, and what comes finds an easy fit. The second is that they are ambivalent to whatever the outcomes turn out to be. They have done their part by being present and aware. They leave the rest to the Source.

Harmony is therefore not a feeling, exactly. It is a posture. The posture of someone who has stopped fighting their life. Anyone who has been near such a person knows what this feels like. The room around them changes. The Institute's whole reason for being is to make this posture available to people who do not currently have access to it.

| *When the gripping has ended, harmony is what remains.*

— Synthesized from the corpus

§ 19

## Compassion as Default

---

I want to say something about compassion that gets routinely missed.

Compassion, in the philosophy I am describing, is not an instruction. It is a consequence. It is what naturally arises when separation has been seen through. If we are all differentiated expressions of one Source, then the suffering of another is, in some real sense, our own. There is no effort required to care about it. Caring is the default. Not caring is what would require effort, the effort of maintaining the illusion that we are separate enough for another's suffering to be none of our business.

This is why every contemplative tradition, when followed to its depth, arrives at compassion. It is not because the traditions imposed compassion as a rule. It is because the seeing through of separation revealed compassion as the underlying state.

The implication is that the path to compassion is not the discipline of being nicer. The path to compassion is the dissolution of the illusion that the other is other. Be nicer if we can. Kindness in the meantime is its own gift. But know that the deeper practice is the seeing through. When the seeing through happens, the niceness becomes redundant. We do not have to remind ourselves to care about the person in front of us. We simply care. We cannot help it. The two of us are the same Source.

Compassion is also a form of believing in the greatness of others. Not the surface greatness of accomplishment or status. The deeper greatness that comes from being a differentiated expression of the Source. When we are compassionate, we are choosing to remember that the other in front of us is the Source taking another shape. We are believing in them, in the precise sense of recognizing what they are underneath what they appear to be.

Love is an aspect of compassion. Some people describe them as different things. I do not. Love is the form compassion takes when the recognition of the other becomes warm enough to extend itself. Love can be given freely, without expectation, in abundance, because the supply does not run out. We are not the source of love. We are simply the channels through which it flows. There is enough.

There is only one love. I do not mean this metaphorically. Romantic love, parental love, filial love, friendship, the love of strangers, all of these are the one love taking different shapes through different relationships. The love I have for my child and the love I have for a stranger I will never meet again are the same love at the source. They only look different in their context.

The only thing that disrupts the flow of love is hatred. Hatred is not the opposite of love. Hatred is a blockage. The river is still there. We have built a dam. To remove the dam is not to manufacture love, but to allow what was already flowing to flow again.

This has practical consequences. It changes how disputes are entered. It changes how harm is responded to. It changes how grief is held. It does not make a person passive. It makes them able to act from a place that is not threatened.

| *Dare to build bridges, instead of walls.*

— Posted 2022

§ 20

## Sovereignty and Surrender

---

The philosophy I am describing rests on what looks like a paradox: we become most ourselves when we hold the least. We act most fully when we control least.

This sounds contradictory until it is lived. The conventional view is that to be sovereign, to be one's own person, to live with agency, to make one's own choices, requires holding firmly to who one is. Sovereignty, on this view, is asserted by gripping.

The view I am offering is the opposite. The gripping is itself the loss of sovereignty. To grip is to be controlled by what one is gripping. The man who cannot put down his anger is not free; his anger is free, and it has taken him along for the ride. The woman who cannot release her identity is not sovereign; her identity is sovereign, and she is its subject. Real sovereignty is the capacity to act from a center that does not require defending.

Surrender, in the sense I am using it, is not capitulation. It is the opposite. Surrender is the willingness to let things be what they are without requiring them to be what we want them to be. From that willingness, paradoxically, comes the capacity to act with maximum effect. The energy that was being used to grip is now available for the actual work.

I think of this often when I watch people who are remarkable in their fields. The great athlete, the great musician, the great teacher, there is, in their working, a quality of release. They are not straining. They are not forcing. They are participating in something that is happening through them. The technical word for this in martial arts is *mushin*, no mind. The Tao Te Ching calls it *wu wei*, non-action that is somehow the most powerful kind of action.

This is the kind of sovereignty I am pointing at. Sovereignty as the opposite of gripping. Sovereignty as the willingness to be what one already is, without the constant maintenance of what one is afraid of not being.

*To be detached is to revel in every experience, but always knowing that you also have to let go.*

— Posted 2020



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

§ 21

## The Way of Action

---

I have said the philosophy I am describing is not passive. It is worth dwelling on this for a section, because the misunderstanding is common.

The objection runs something like this: if everything is a play, if separation is illusion, if attachment is the source of suffering, then why bother doing anything? Why try? Why care?

The objection assumes that caring requires gripping. That trying requires straining. That action requires the desperate self-protection of the ego. None of these are true.

Action is possible without gripping. In fact, action is more possible without gripping. The ego, occupied with defending itself, has very little energy left over for real work. The released self has all of its energy available. It can do more, with less effort, than the gripping self ever could.

This is the way of action I am pointing at. It is not the way of passivity, of withdrawal from the world, of retreat into a cave to contemplate the void. The Tao Te Ching is not a manual for hermits. It is a manual for sages who are very much in the world, advising rulers, working with people, taking action when action is needed, but doing so from a center that is not threatened.

The Institute is, in its way, an exercise in this kind of action. We are building things. We are launching products. We are publishing books. We are organizing programs. The doing is not the problem. The problem is when the doing is done from the gripping place. When it is done from the released place, the doing itself becomes part of the practice.

| *Dreams die when there is no energy to propel them forward.*

— Posted 2024

§ 22

## What This Is For

---

I want to close with the question that should always close a philosophy: what is this for?

The philosophy and metaphysics I have described are not for me to be right. They are for a way of life to become available, to me, and to anyone who is interested.

The way of life is one in which the burdens we have carried can be set down. The masks we have worn can be remembered as masks. The story of separation can soften. The charge can release. The fear that has shaped most of our choices can lose its grip. Something quieter can come forward.

I do not believe this is a luxury. I believe it is the work the moment demands. We are entering a period in which the human species will have to decide whether to be ruled by its constructed selves or by something closer to its true nature. The constructed selves are at war with each other. They will go on being at war as long as they are running the show. Synthetic intelligence will accelerate the war if the constructed selves remain in charge of how it is used. The only way out, and I mean this practically, not poetically, is the way through: the inward way, the way of remembering, the way of letting go.

The Divine Karma Institute exists for this reason. It is the institution this philosophy required. The books are the philosophy. The platform is the practice. The community is the company. The neuro-sync app is the measurement. All of them serve the one work: a generation of human beings learning, again, how to be what they were before they forgot.

That is what this is for. That is what it has always been for.

| *We are different perspectives of a unified source.*

— Synthesized from the corpus



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

## Closing Note

I have said what I have come to see. I have said it in connected prose so that it can be examined. I have grounded it in a thesis, in nine pillars, in a metaphysics, in a philosophy. None of these is the thing itself. The thing itself is what each reader does with it.

If what I have written is useful, take it. If it is not, leave it. I will not be offended either way. The philosophy I have described does not require defenders. It is either true to our experience or it is not, and we will know which by living it, not by arguing about it.

What I would ask, if I could ask anything, is this: that we treat our own lives as a fair test. Try the seeing. Try the release. Try the practice. If, after a real attempt, what I have described does not match what we find, set it down. If it does, the work continues.

There is no further argument from me. The rest is yours.



*So we let go.*

David Ramirez · Divine Karma Institute · May 2026



DIVINE KARMA  
— INSTITUTE —

[divine-karma.com](http://divine-karma.com)