

Nowhere to Go: the Flaw of Ascension

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One of the most popular new age concepts is the idea of ascension. In its basic form this concept says that we all (or only some of us) will reach a vibrational state that will move us into the next dimension (usually called the 5th dimension), which is a non-physical state. With ascension, we will leave behind the horrors of physical existence for a more purified existence. Although this idea is simply symbolic for many people, for the vast majority of believers, this kind of ascension is held to be literally true.

But there is a flaw in paradise, in the very conception of it. Spiritual masters throughout the ages have said over and over again: *There is nowhere to go*. Reality is right here. Truth is right here. That which you are—your Self—is right here. In fact, your Self has never changed. No matter where you have gone, what you have done, what you have experienced, That Which You Are remains unchanged, forever. If the goal of spiritual life is Self-Realization—then there is no need to go anywhere. In fact, being focused on getting somewhere else becomes a distraction from the knowing of Truth, which is always here and now. It actually moves you away from Self-Realization, not towards it.

For argument's sake, let's say that literal ascension is possible. What then would you gain from it? It would probably be a lovely experience. But, as the spiritual masters have said down through the ages: the goal of spiritual life is not to create a more lovely, more blissful or more fulfilling experience, it is to awaken out of the identification with experience, to realize the Truth, to have Self-Realization. Does a more lovely experience facilitate this? Usually: no. People who do awaken are usually driven to know who they are. They are desperate for Realization. Or, they are desperate to know God. Sometimes they are just desperate, in horrible emotional pain, and in the middle of that pain, as they surrender into the abyss they expect to swallow them up, they awaken. It is rare for someone who is simply having a lovely life-experience to suddenly awaken.

The other assumption built into the concept of ascension is that there is something 'wrong' with here-now, with life as it is. Only after ascension will life be okay. But is God not present here and now? Is beauty not present here and now? Is your Self not present here and now? What then is not okay? Is the suffering of the world not okay? No one wants to suffer, but if the pain of the world is too painful for an individual to experience, all that means is that they cannot handle their own experience of pain. They need to escape from their own pain and suffering. Ascension does offer them hope of escape. But again, the spiritual masters throughout the ages have said: there is nowhere to go to hide from yourself. Do you really think you can hide from yourself in the 5th dimension? How can you realize your Self while you are hiding from yourself? The very act of pushing something away—of saying, "I am not willing to experience That"—maintains the experience of duality, of separation. So, the very act of hiding or avoiding keeps you from realizing your Self. The act of hiding also reinforces the false belief that the experience of ego is actually the Self. After all, who is it that wants to hide? Is it the Self that needs to hide, or is it the ego, lost in its own suffering? To the extent that you identify with the ego's experience, you reinforce

your identification with your ego and move further away from the realization of Self. The Self allows everything to be as it is; it rests in the spontaneous unfoldment of here and now. It finds itself in everything, as everything, in all dimensions, including this one, filled with all its suffering.

None of this is meant to imply that there isn't an evolutionary process going on for humanity. Of course there is. And the pace of it is quite amazing! But the next evolutionary movement is not going to magically create Self-Realization for you. And neither will the next one, or the next one. But you are human; you already have what you need for spiritual awakening. The evolution you needed is already done!

So you can play the game of hoping for ascension—hoping that ascension is possible and hoping that you will experience it. Or you can go after the Truth, which is easier to do and more painful, but will lead you directly to That which you have always yearned for. Only the Truth will set you free.

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