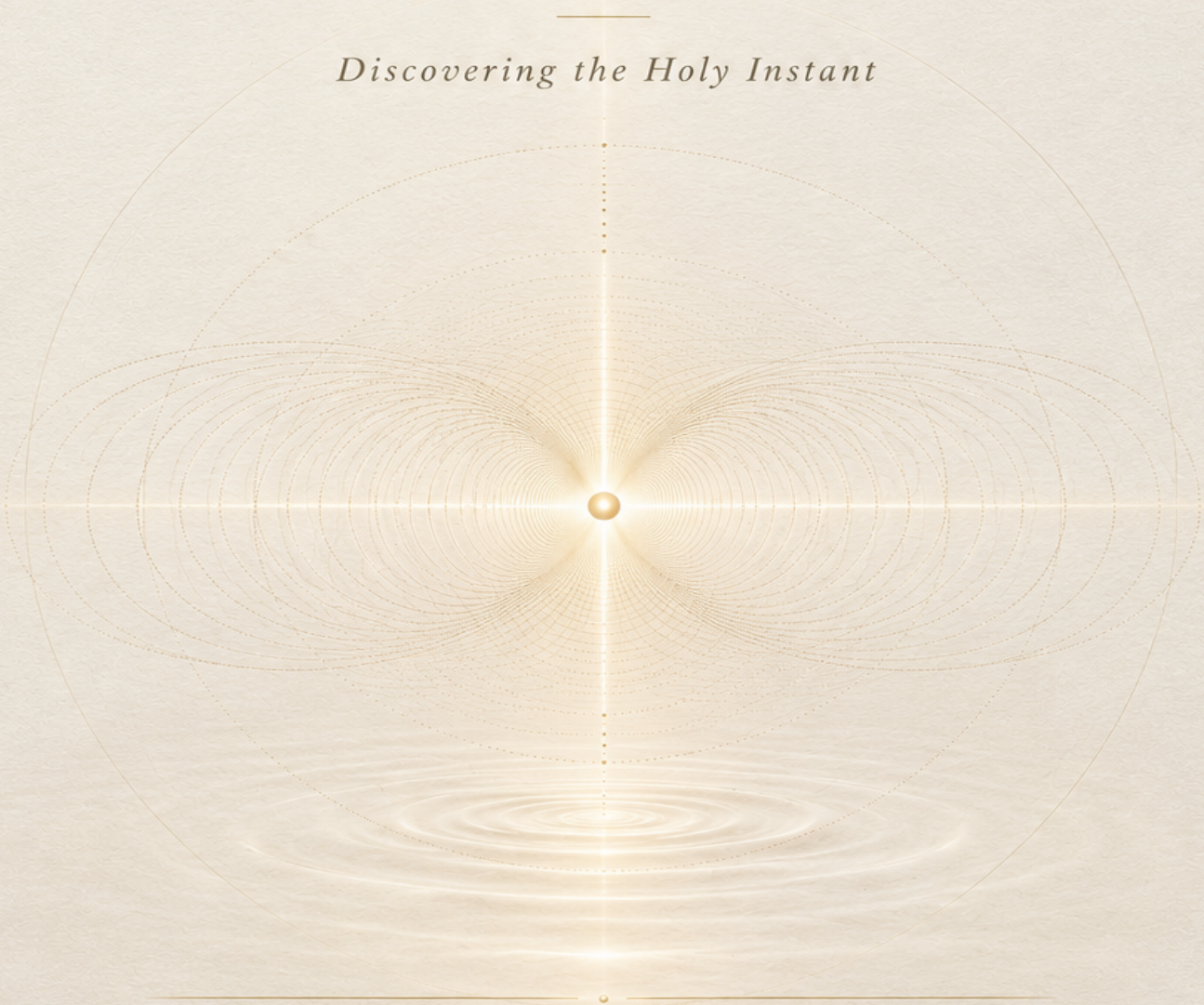


INNER ARCHIVES

— 001 —

THE MOMENT OUTSIDE OF TIME

Discovering the Holy Instant



THE FORGOTTEN PRINCIPLES BEHIND
AWARENESS, AWAKENING & THE SELF

AARON GARRITY



OPENING

There are moments in life when something impossible happens. The room is the same. The people are the same. Whatever was unresolved thirty seconds ago remains unresolved. The phone may still ring. The debt still exists. The diagnosis has not changed. The person who hurt you has not suddenly become someone else. Nothing changes. Yet everything changes.

- *Nothing changes. Yet everything changes.* -

The past has not rewritten itself. And yet, for one almost imperceptible instant, none of it possesses you. Something has stopped. Not life. Not the world. You. Or, more precisely, the part of you that has been narrating the world without interruption. The voice explaining. Remembering. Defending. Anticipating. Comparing. Judging. Rehearsing what should have happened.

Preparing for what might. For one instant, that voice becomes quiet. And beneath it is something strangely familiar. Not an answer. Not an idea. Not even a belief. Presence. The astonishing recognition that before you had an opinion about this moment... the moment was already here. And so were you.

THE SEARCH

For much of my life, I searched for truth as though truth were somewhere else. Religion. Philosophy. Ancient texts. Teachers. Mystics. Masters. Success. Failure. Love. Loss. I kept assuming that one more understanding would complete the architecture. One more piece. One more realization. One final answer that would cause everything else to fall into place.

- *What if the search itself had become the distance?* -

But eventually I encountered a possibility far more unsettling than the idea that I had not yet found what I was searching for. What if nothing was missing? What if I had spent years looking through the window for something that was quietly looking through my eyes? That changes the question. Perhaps awakening is not the acquisition of some extraordinary state.

Perhaps it is what remains when, for one instant, we stop insisting that this moment become something else. What if the search itself had become the distance? A Course in Miracles gives such a moment a beautiful name: the Holy Instant. I have come to understand it less as a supernatural interruption of ordinary life than as an interruption of the machinery through which we ordinarily experience life.

The past loosens its grip. The future releases its claim. And suddenly there is only this. Not yesterday interpreted. Not tomorrow anticipated. This. There is almost nothing to hold onto there. Which may be precisely why it feels holy.

THE MOMENT

Most of us believe we are experiencing reality. Much of the time, we are experiencing our interpretation of reality. The distinction is enormous. Someone walks into a room. Before that person has spoken ten words, the mind has begun constructing. Who are they? Do I trust them? What do they think of me? What does their expression mean?

- *We forget that we wrote it.* -

Why did they say it that way? Does this remind me of someone? Am I safe? Am I respected? Am I winning? Am I losing? Reality barely has time to introduce itself before memory begins writing the script. Then something remarkable happens. The interpretation becomes the event. The assumption becomes the fact. The memory becomes the present.

We forget that we wrote it. And eventually we may spend years suffering over a paragraph written in our own mind. This does not mean that nothing happens to us. Things happen. People betray. Bodies fail. Promises are broken. Fortunes disappear. People we love die. There is real pain in human life, and consciousness should never become a clever philosophy for denying it.

But pain and the story we build around pain are not always the same thing. One occurs. The other can continue for decades. That distinction became important to me. Because if I could see the story being constructed... perhaps I did not have to destroy it. Perhaps I only had to stop mistaking it for reality.

THE PAUSE

Every once in a while, life interrupts the narrator. A sunset. A child's laughter. A piece of music. A moment of beauty so complete that commentary would diminish it. Sometimes it is love. Sometimes it is grief. Sometimes life becomes so overwhelming that the mind finally reaches the edge of its own competence and admits: I do not know.

- *That fraction may contain an entire universe.* -

And there it is. The pause. We tend to think of a pause as an absence. I have begun to wonder whether the opposite is true. Perhaps the pause is what becomes visible when everything unnecessary disappears. Before the title. Before the resume. Before the victories. Before the failures. Before the wounds. Before the version of yourself you have spent decades constructing, defending and explaining.

Something is still here. You can observe your thoughts. Therefore some part of you is not the thought. You can notice your fear. Therefore the entirety of you cannot be the fear. You can watch an identity change. Therefore perhaps you are not merely the identity. So what is watching? I do not pretend to have a final answer.

But I think that question may be more important than many of the answers we spend our lives collecting. Because once you discover the space between awareness and the thing being observed, something extraordinary becomes possible. You no longer have to believe every thought simply because it appeared in your mind. There is a

fraction of a second between the thought... and the one who sees it.

That fraction may contain an entire universe.

THE SEEING

The greatest illusion may not be that we fail to see reality. It may be that we are convinced we already do. We look through memory and call it sight. Through fear and call it intuition. Through injury and call it wisdom. Through expectation and call it truth. Yesterday quietly places itself over today like a transparent sheet of glass.

We look through it so long that eventually we forget the glass is there. Then we meet a new person through an old betrayal. A new opportunity through an old failure. A new love through an old abandonment. A new moment through an old identity. And we wonder why life keeps repeating itself. Sometimes it isn't.

Look again. We are. This is where awareness becomes something more than a spiritual word. It becomes a radical form of seeing. Can I encounter what is in front of me before deciding what it means? Can I hear another human being without simultaneously preparing my response? Can I experience disagreement without immediately manufacturing an enemy?

Can I feel fear without turning fear into prophecy? Can I notice the story without becoming its prisoner? The world may not change at all. But the eyes through which I meet it can. And when the eyes change, in a very real sense, the world I experience changes with them. Perhaps this is part of what the great Masters were attempting to reveal in different languages.

Jesus pointing toward a Kingdom that cannot be reduced to external power. Buddha examining attachment and the machinery of suffering. Lao Tzu returning again and again to what exists before force and interference. Different centuries. Different cultures. Different vocabularies. Yet beneath them runs a strangely persistent invitation: Look again.

- *Look again.* -

THE RELEASE

There is another reason the Holy Instant is difficult. To enter it, we must surrender something we have become extraordinarily attached to. Our case. Human beings can carry a case for years. The evidence. The witnesses. The closing argument. Why I was right. Why you were wrong. Why I became this way. Why you owe me.

- *The past may explain me. It does not have to own me.* -

Why I cannot move forward until the past somehow admits what it did. I know this territory. There is a peculiar seduction in being right about our wounds. Because sometimes we are right. The betrayal happened. The injustice was real. The promise was broken. And yet a devastating question eventually appears: How long am I willing to remain imprisoned by something simply because my account of it is accurate?

That question changed forgiveness for me. Forgiveness is not declaring that something did not happen. It is not calling cruelty love. It is not abandoning discernment. It is not inviting harmful people back into your life. It is not forgetting. Perhaps forgiveness is something much more demanding. Seeing through. Seeing through the event without denying the event.

Seeing through the identity it created. Seeing through the story that says because this happened, I must carry it forever. The past may explain me. It does not have to own me. And perhaps this is why forgiveness can feel less like giving something to another person... and more like returning something to ourselves.

THE REMEMBERING

Eventually the search performs a strange circle. We travel outward. We read. Study. Build. Achieve. Accumulate. Lose. Begin again. We climb mountains looking for perspective and cross oceans looking for ourselves. And then one day the possibility appears: The awareness searching for the answer has been present for every answer. It was there before the first book.

- *The wave does not need to reach the ocean.* -

Before the first teacher. Before the first success. Before the first failure. Before you knew enough about the world to construct the person you eventually became. There is something almost humorous about it. A wave crossing the ocean in search of water. It could travel ten thousand miles. Study every map. Interview every other wave.

Become the most accomplished wave in history. And still the answer would remain impossibly close. The wave does not need to reach the ocean. It needs to recognize what it has never ceased to be. Maybe this is why the deepest realizations so often feel less like learning and more like remembering. Not: "I finally found it." But: Of course.

THE MOMENT OUTSIDE OF TIME

We usually imagine time as something the clock measures. But there is another kind of time. Psychological time. The past we continue carrying. The future we continuously rehearse. The conversation from twelve years ago that can still change our heartbeat. The event six months from now that can frighten us while we are sitting safely in a room today.

- *Because we stop leaving.* -

Because we stop leaving. The body occupies the present. The mind can live almost anywhere else. Then, occasionally, everything converges. The body is here. Attention is here. Life is here. No argument with yesterday. No negotiation with tomorrow. And perhaps this is the moment outside of time. Not because clocks stop. For one instant, there is nowhere else to be.

And therefore there is no distance between ourselves and life. The observer and the observed come extraordinarily close. The seeker and the sought begin to look suspiciously like the same thing. Separation

A full-page background image of a mountain range at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and grey, with soft clouds. The mountains are dark and silhouetted against the bright sky. In the foreground, a calm body of water reflects the mountains and the sky, creating a mirror-like effect. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

STILLNESS
IS NOT THE ABSENCE
OF LIFE.

IT IS THE PRESENCE
OF EVERYTHING
THAT MATTERS.

weakens. Not as doctrine. As experience. And the extraordinary thing is that nothing extraordinary may be happening. You may simply be sitting in a chair.

Watching light move across a wall. Listening to someone breathe beside you. But for once you are not somewhere else while it happens. You are here. Perhaps holiness was never about making the ordinary supernatural. Perhaps holiness is what the ordinary looks like when we finally stop looking away.

THE RETURN

The Holy Instant cannot become another place to hide. If awareness only works in silence, away from difficult people, away from responsibility, away from disappointment, then we have simply created a more sophisticated escape. Back to the phone. The business. The marriage. The children. The bills. The body. The uncertainty. The difficult conversation. The person who still knows exactly which button to push.

- *The test is the return.* -

We return to the same world. But perhaps not as exactly the same person. We carry a little less yesterday into the room. We require a little less from tomorrow. The test is the return. We listen without immediately preparing our defense. We notice the first sentence of the old story forming... and sometimes, wonderfully, we do not write the second.

That may not look like enlightenment. It may look like restraint. Like listening. Like mercy. Like not sending the message. Like admitting you were wrong. Like realizing you no longer need an apology that may never come. Like sitting beside someone you love and actually being there. Maybe awakening is far less theatrical than we imagined.

Maybe it happens quietly, thousands of times. Each time we return.

FINAL REFLECTION

I spent years searching for truth. And eventually I encountered a possibility I had not anticipated. Perhaps the search itself was the final thing I had to surrender. Not curiosity. Not learning. Not wonder. But the assumption beneath the search: that what I was seeking was somewhere other than here. So I began asking a different question.

What remains when fear becomes quiet? Something. What remains when judgment becomes quiet? Something. What remains when the endless autobiography of who I think I am becomes quiet? We spend much of our lives trying to arrive at a place from which we have never actually departed. Something. I can feel it more easily than I can name it.

Awareness. Presence. Being. Perhaps love. Perhaps all of those words are merely fingers pointing toward something language cannot quite hold. And maybe that is all right. There are truths we understand by defining them. There may be others we understand only by becoming still enough to recognize them. Maybe that is what the Masters were pointing toward.

Not a destination. Not another identity. Not spiritual achievement. Not some perfected future version of ourselves standing at the end of a heroic journey. Maybe the Kingdom was never waiting at the end. Maybe it was the awareness watching every step. The silence beneath every question. The presence beneath every identity. The love that remained even when fear temporarily convinced us otherwise.

And perhaps the great spiritual paradox is this: The moment outside of time does not give us something we did not possess. It removes, for an instant, everything that made us believe we were separate from it. Nothing changes. And everything changes. Because the world is still there. Your life is still there. You are still there.

Only now, for one impossible instant... you are there too.

- *Nothing changes. And everything changes.* -

*Nothing changes.
And everything changes.*

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