

**Preview to After Awareness: The End of the Path** (forthcoming Non-Duality Press/New Harbinger)  
by Greg Goode

This book is about the direct path, which is the teaching first given by Shri Atmananda Krishna Menon (1883-1959). It is a way of reaching lasting love and happiness undisturbed by conditions.

This book discusses aspects of the direct path that are rarely if ever written down. This book is different from the others I've written on the subject. In this book I'm not giving pointers or exercises to assist in nondual realization. Rather, I wish to provide a look at the inner workings of the direct path, to show how the machinery does its work. My sympathetic deconstruction is written from a mixed standpoint, as though I had one foot inside the path and one foot outside. Seeing both sides of the path allows us to look around without having to become converted, without having to believe in the truth of the path's concepts.

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## \_\_ CHAPTER 1 - ABOUT THIS BOOK \_\_

This chapter discusses who this book is for, and why I've written it. It's about communication as much as about the path itself. One of the book's main purposes is to find a way to talk about the direct path in a twenty-first-century world. In fact, the topics in this book arose from twenty-first-century confrontations among different spiritual paths. What do Buddhists and physicists say about a path

like this one, which places so much emphasis on a concept such as “global awareness?” These days, people from different backgrounds talk to each other much than did ten or twenty years ago. In fact, most people looking for a spiritual home will shop around before settling down. They’ll spend some time with a variety of offerings, such as traditional Vedanta, yoga, Western mysticism, Zen, Theravada, Tibetan Buddhism, and independent nonduality teachings. There are even special internet discussion groups created for these kinds of inter-path interchanges.

So how does the direct path represent itself in an open forum like that? The book comes from a consideration of this question.

### \_\_CHAPTER 2 - DIRECT-PATH SUMMARY\_\_

This chapter gives a summary of the direct path for those who may be unfamiliar with it. It includes an example of inquiry, as well as a list of direct-path teachers and expositors.

### \_\_CHAPTER 3 - THE PATH AND THE HEART\_\_

This chapter calls for all teachers and communicators of nondual teachings to include some emphasis on ethics. I examine several arguments saying that enlightenment alone makes you compassionate, makes you act spontaneously in the best interest for all concerned. Because of this, say the arguments, there’s no need to teach ethics along with nondual teaching. I examine these arguments and find them to be without merit. I tell several stories from my own life, and how I’ve come to the conclusion that ethical teaching of some sort is required if we’re to treat others well. Nondual realization by itself is simply not enough.

### \_\_CHAPTER 4 - THE LANGUAGE OF JOYFUL IRONY\_\_

This chapter introduces the notion of a “nonreferential approach” towards language. This approach is powerfully freeing, and may even be the most freeing for those relate to art and poetry more than to self-inquiry. Taking off from a few remarks made by Shri Atmananda, this chapter suggests a way to communicate without assuming that objects actually exist (and without assuming that they don’t). By engaging language nonreferentially, your expressive potential is freed up. You’ll never have to worry about “nondual correctness.” You’ll never have to talk in circumlocutions, such as “This body/mind mechanism would like to get together with that fictional character for a cup of coffee”

### \_\_CHAPTER 5 - THE GURU DOCTRINE\_\_

Is a human guru needed? Shri Atmananda is on record as insisting that for Self-knowledge we MUST have a living human guru who explains the Truth to us face-to-face. It passes as an unquestioned truth in the direct path. But is it really true? Does Shri Atmananda really mean it? It’s an important question, since there aren’t that many direct path teachers, and students can’t always travel to attend

retreats. In this chapter I examine a wide variety of Atmananda sources to deal with this question.

### \_\_CHAPTER 6 - ALTERNATIVES TO INQUIRY\_\_

The direct path has the reputation for being on the intellectual side. But there are a lot of other direct-path activities that don't get much ink. I go over many of these activities, including Karma yoga, bhakti yoga, reminders, standing as awareness, the Heart Opener, guided meditation, and the yoga of awareness.

### \_\_CHAPTER 7 - WITNESSING AWARENESS – INTRODUCTION\_\_

The main function of witnessing awareness is to help us discover experientially that we never experience separation, even when we think we do. This chapter and the next two discuss the witness and how it works in the direct path. I define the witness in a non-metaphysical way. If you are curious about the direct path but come from a path that has no witness notion, you'll be able to understand what the direct path means by witnessing awareness. And you won't need to believe that it exists like a transcendent entity. I explain why the direct path has "one" witness, not none, and not two or more. I also explain how the direct path is eco-friendly. It cleans up after itself. It doesn't leave debris around the campsite. Witnessing awareness, direct experience and awareness are not lasting attachments. They don't remain on the scene any longer than necessary.

### \_\_CHAPTER 8 - THE OPAQUE WITNESS\_\_

The opaque witness is how we feel witnessing awareness is towards the beginning of the path. This is when we're investigating the world of physical objects and bodies, including our own. The witness seems "opaque" because we feel it to be loaded up with unseen attributes like memory, choice, and the ability to direct attention to and from. This is the natural way to think about the witness as we begin. And then as we proceed, the opaque witness becomes clarified.

### \_\_CHAPTER 9 - THE TRANSPARENT WITNESS\_\_

As we investigate the mind, the witness becomes clarified. This is because we investigate things like memory, choice, and attention. These are the very attributes that we felt were somehow part of the witness. But as we investigate, we find that these features aren't part of the witness at all. We discover them to be nothing more than observed objects like colors or sounds. These realizations clarify the witness. We no longer psychologize the witness or think of it along the lines of a container. Because of this, we'll no longer suspect that there is anything either "inside" or "outside" awareness. The entire gestalt of objective existence (as in "There could really be something out there") will be a thing of the past. The witness is now fully transparent. If you believe in reincarnation, this is the point at which you have attained freedom from involuntary reincarnation. This is freedom from

suffering. At this point, the witness has done its job, and it begins to fade away in a loving and benign way. The fading happens faster for some people and slower for others. The witness can also be inquired into. In either case, it comes to an end in happiness and freedom.

## \_\_CHAPTER 10 - NONDUAL REALIZATION AND THE END OF THE WITNESS\_\_

When the witness has faded away or collapsed through inquiry, this is nondual realization. This is a one-time thing. It isn't a meditative state that flip-flops back and forth. It's more of a fundamental gestalt shift that you don't return from. The toothpaste doesn't return to the tube.

## \_\_CHAPTER 11 - AFTER AWARENESS – THE END OF THE PATH\_\_

Some accounts of the direct path stop at the point of the previous chapter, with the end of the witness. This chapter goes much further. This chapter concentrates on freedom from the path and all its tools. I discuss a shocking but little known passage in which Shri Atmananda says that finally, there isn't even awareness. I relate my own experience that conforms to this surprising revelation. I discuss the notion of "joyful irony," which is related to the nonreferentiality discussed in Chapter 4. In joyful irony, we realize that even our most beloved vocabulary can't be measured against reality. We realize that our favorite concepts are no closer to reality than any other concepts. There is immense freedom, generosity and love in this realization. How do we speak? We have the freedom to stick with the direct path's vocabulary, take up another one, or make up our own. Whatever happens is a matter of love, not metaphysical accuracy. The love and freedom are the secret to "after awareness" and the "end of the path."