

## Three levels of consciousness.



Let's imagine life as water flowing in a riverbed.

The first level – the rational level of Consciousness -represents the world we are familiar with; it is our comfort zone, our safety net,

our harbour. We sit on the banks of the river and look out at the flowing river. Day by day, we sit there observing the water and eco-system that surrounds it, and we gather information and accumulate data to examine and analyze. The sum total of the knowledge we have of the river, we have gained from the mind through information, theory and observation. Our vision of the river is very myopic; we have limited ourselves to merely watching and learning from the outside. **I** is the subject (the observer) - and **it** is the river - the object (the observed). **I** and **It** have no connection. The observer and the observed have no experience of each other.

Everything is learned from the outside; we have identified the river from the outside, from the river banks. We have no actual experience of the river, we only know it rationally. The same goes for life and Spirit, for ourselves and others.

We judge and identify the river, Spirit, life and ourselves from the outside. We learn all about them from books, statistics, tests, analyses; from our family, friends, education, culture, religion, politics, fashion, etc.. We have learned how we are, should be, must be and have to be from the others, and consequently, we don't know who we are, and we never feel enough or worthy enough. Expecting to learn about ourselves from outside of us, only from theory and other people's experiences and beliefs and ideas, is like expecting and believing you can learn how to swim from a book!

At some point, however, some people feel drawn to go BE-yond what they have learned and been taught, and so they move closer and closer to the edge of the river bank - they take off their shoes and put their toes in the water and, eventually, they either fall into the water or jump in directly.

Now everything changes, because the knowledge they have of the water is no longer based on just theory and observation; they now have personal experience of it. They are in the water, they are wet and now they know what it actually



feels like. The information – the mind - has suddenly fused with the experience – the body. There is a mind/body experience. The Mind and the body remain distinct, but they are no longer separate. They have now been re-connected and a transforming union has occurred.

Now they have expanded to the second level of consciousness - the mythical level of Consciousness. The subject **I** (the observer), has connected with the object **It** (the observed) and there is now an **I - Thou** connection; subject embraces subject. There is respectful reverence (thou = Lei or Voi in Italian); we see each other, we have compassion for each other.

Once we are in the water, we have to learn to move, to float, to paddle; we have to learn how to swim. No matter how much theory we have available, until we actually get into the water



and get wet; until we actually feel and move our way through the water, all the information we have gathered is useless, for we can never learn to swim from a book, we can never learn to swim just using our head. Selfsame for life; selfsame about knowing yourself.

When we have learnt to swim, when we have learnt to experience our lives consciously, we are able to enter the third level of consciousness - the Consciousness of Unity, the Consciousness of Oneness. The observer and the observed that united and became **I - Thou** have now become **WE ARE**. We are still individuals, but now we know All That We Are. We are now in a state of Oneness. Now we know that All is One.

Just as the banks of the river keep us separated from the water, so the mind keeps us separated from Spirit; it keeps us separated from ourselves. The illusion of separation - that we are limited, disconnected and fragmented is created in the mind, by the mind. We can only connect to Spirit and we can only connect to our true selves through experience; through the sacred union of our mind and our body.

*Reference notes:*

*Anodea Judith in Eastern Body, Western Mind (2004), based on theories by Eric Jantsch - Systems theorist.*