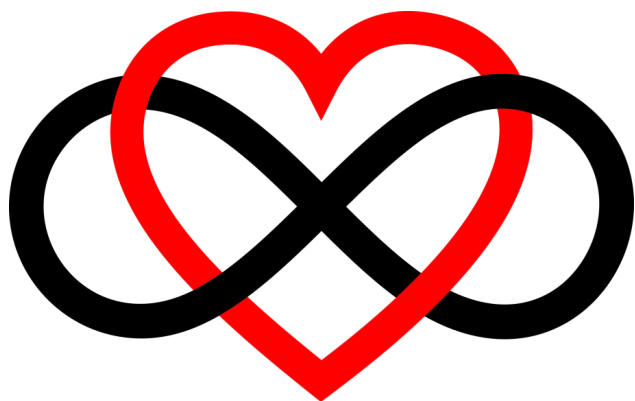


# Time and Time Perception: A Spiritual Understanding

The Concept of time and time perception has been an enigma for centuries and will remain so for centuries. What is Time? A sense of the mind, isn't it? If there is no mind, there is no sense of time. J Krishnamurthy says, "Mind is time." Time is a reflection of the mind. When you say, "time stopped for a while", it is the mind that had stopped and you feel that time has stopped.



## Let's start with the mind

What is mind? Mind is not a thing. It is like a process, a phenomenon, an event. It is like the wave: it exists, but is not substantial. It has no substance in it. Thus it cannot be dissolved. As it has no substance, it can disappear without leaving a trace behind, like a wave that leaves no trace behind when it disappears into the ocean. So mind is like a bird flying into the sky with no footprints left behind, not even a trace.

So the mind doesn't exist, only thoughts exist. The thoughts move so fast that one thinks and feels that something, what we call the mind, exists there in continuity. It is like a crowd that does exist in a sense, but it is only the individuals that exist. But many individuals together give the feeling as

if there is a crowd.

Mind is just the appearance. Thoughts exist, the mind doesn't exist. When you penetrate the mind deeper by deep direct observation, it disappears. Only individual thoughts now exist, and you immediately realize that thoughts are like clouds – they come and go – and *you* are the sky. When there is no mind, you can immediately perceive that you are no longer involved in the thoughts. Thoughts are there, they pass like the clouds passing through the sky, or the wind passing through the trees. Thoughts pass through you because you are a vast emptiness with no hindrance. You are like the sky infinitely open. Once you start experiencing this existentially that you are the watcher, the witness, the mind seems to be in control.

## **Mind is the absence of your presence**

So mind itself cannot be controlled because it is itself not! Also, as nobody exists beyond the mind, who will control it? If somebody is controlling the mind, then it will be only a part, a fragment of the mind-controlling another fragment of the mind. This is ego.

When you look silently deep into the mind, the mind simply disappears. Thoughts will remain, they are existential, but the mind will not be found. You can see the inner emptiness, but it also cannot control. It can only be observed. But the very phenomenon of observation, of witnessing, of looking, is the control and becomes the control – because the illusion of the 'mind' disappears by this direct witnessing. *So mind is the absence of your presence.*



## Now let's understand time and time perception

Time perception is a sense of the mind, as there is no time and time perception when there is a state of no mind – like in deep sleep (also called '*sushupti*') or when the mind is in a very deep, single-minded concentration state, where you 'lose' the sense of time or when you are there with someone whom you love deeply, you again lose the sense of time with that person.

Time, like the mind, is also a process, a phenomenon, an event. It is like the wave: it exists, but is not substantial. It has no substance in it. Thus it cannot be dissolved. As it has no substance, it can disappear without leaving a trace behind. So time doesn't exist, only events and thoughts exist. The events and thoughts move so fast that one thinks and feels that something, what we call time exists out there in continuity. It is like a crowd that does exist in a sense, but only individuals exist. In reality, it is only the *presence (here and now)* that exists.



## **Time is also the absence of your presence**

So just like the mind, time is also just an appearance. When the mind is still, there is no time. When you penetrate deep into the time, it disappears and you are left with only individual thoughts. Immediately you come to know that thoughts are like clouds – they come and go – and you are timeless, vast open as the sky; you can immediately perceive that you are no more involved in the thoughts. Thoughts are there, they pass like the wind passing through the trees. In such a deeper penetrative state of looking at time *directly*, you become the watcher, the witness, the observer, and this very phenomenon of witnessing, of looking is the control and becomes the control. Then, the illusion of 'time' disappears.

There is one more new perception that comes when you penetrate or look at the mind and time deeply. You can see that the thoughts are not yours. They come, stay in you for a while, and then they go. They don't originate in you and don't belong to you. They rest in you, like a cloud resting on top of a hill. They then move on their own. If you simply watch it as *it is*, control is attained. Here the word 'control' means not the control *by* the mind, it means the mind and time are controlled. Suddenly you become the master, as you existentially become timeless. Thoughts are there but they are no longer your master, they simply come and go. Like the

lotus, you remain untouched by the raindrops – they fall on the petals but slip away.

When you say you have to have good time management, or you should control time, or you are losing time, or 'time is money', it is a perception due to the tense and packed schedule of modern work and modern tight schedule.

Mind is like an ocean. When the ocean is calm and undisturbed, the waves, the disturbances, are not there. When something from the outside hits the ocean – a strong wind or a tide, tremendous waves arise, creating chaos on the whole surface. The chaos, the waves created, is always on the surface, never in the depth – *cannot be*, because the waves cannot enter in the depth. So everything is just on the surface. If you move inwards and go to the center, control is attained. *The surface may still be disturbed but you are not disturbed in the center.* If you try to understand this as a metaphor, you will attain an understanding. If you try to understand logic, you will miss the point.



## **Perceiving your timelessness directly**

The chaos due to bad time management or losing precious time is like the disturbed wave on the surface. When you work or do

your job as a witness, as a direct observer of your mind *and* time, you can reach timelessness existentially and a control of 'mind' and 'time' is attained and you become the master. This happens due to being a witness, a watcher who is indifferent to the chaos – with an absolute total indifference, which Buddha calls '*Upeksha*'. You become the lotus, who grows (works) but remains untouched by the raindrops of disturbances of time, and you are in control. That's why the lotus carries the whole meaning of the Eastern consciousness.

Yoga or meditation helps you in centering and moving towards the center. You thus get rooted there and abide there; from there only can the whole perspective of time perception and time change. The disturbing waves will still be there on the surface, but they won't reach you. Abiding in your center, you see that they (the disturbing waves) don't *belong* to you, it's just a conflict on the surface due to the intruder.

By and by, as you move deep into your witnessing state, the conflict ceases and you relax. When you are not worried, even the waves can be enjoyed. Nothing is wrong in them and nothing was wrong in them before too. The problem arises because you are also on the surface *with them* in your small boat. The waves can throw your small boat. Fight to control won't help, you will be defeated. If you can accept the waves and let your boat move with them and not against them, then there is no danger. It is like you are surfing, there is a deep *let-go*. It can become a great meditation and give you a meditative state. Then time need not be controlled and time need not control you too.

Once you reach your center, you accept whatever happens on the surface. There is no point in fighting on the surface, but rather slip into the center. Then there is a control of mind and time. This control is not a forced one but is spontaneous because you are centered. So there is no point in you trying to control the mind or time. If you try to control, you will

go mad, because it is only a part of the mind or time trying to control another part of the mind or time – your tight schedule or ‘precious’ time, which you think must be best ‘utilized’. This is all on the surface which doesn’t make any difference



## **An Authentic and True perception of time**

A true perception of time is at the center and in the perception that arises from the center because there you control your mind and time. You are so much in control, so much rooted, that the tight schedule and time management on the surface do not worry you. It doesn’t mean that you will not work on time or not be punctual. With your centering, your planning will be well in advance and you will be punctual. Even if there is any mismanagement in time, you will be in your control and equanimity to graciously accept it. You will spontaneously communicate to the concerned regarding the mismanagement in time; there will be no miscommunication of any kind by you. These will all be spontaneous as all this is controlled by you from your center – the inner shrine of your being. You can look all around in all dimensions, to the whole periphery of your being from the center. The whole time dynamics have undergone metamorphosis in you.



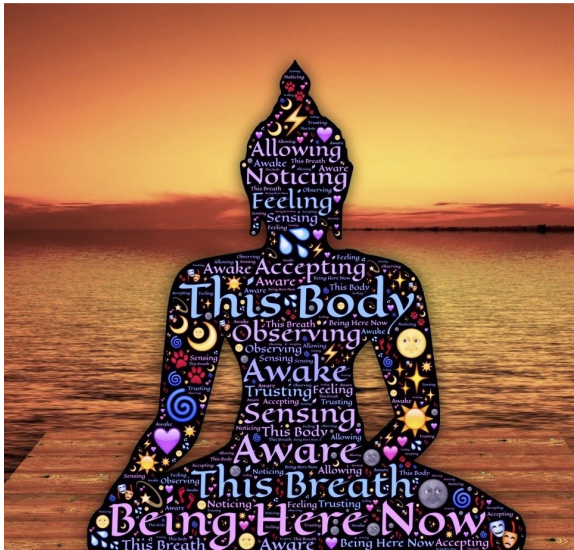


## Memory and time

There is another aspect or standpoint to understand. Mind is memory. Time is memory too, of the past. If you get rid of the memory, you get rid of the mind and time, because *you* are the memory. You can get rid of the memories only by watching them as a witness and discriminating against them. This is *Viveka*, discrimination: you keep on discriminating and go on cutting all your identities that you are not (Upanishads call it '*neti-neti- I am not this, nor that*'), a moment comes when you have eliminated all that you are not. Suddenly, you encounter your being, the witness. This witness cannot be denied; it is the last stratum of your being. You cannot deny it because who will deny it as now only you, the witness remain. There are no two that exist now. Your being encounters yourself in this emptiness. This encounter becomes the control of your mind and time.

You can force your mind or time to be still, but inside it will go on fidgeting. It will fidget more because the mind and time resist control. When Buddha is sitting silently there is no inward fidgeting. He has become silent inside, and that silence has over-flown to his outside. If you are silent inside, if the mind is still and you are existentially in timelessness, in a subtle indifference, the inside will spontaneously overflow outside. You will be in control of yourself and of the time too in your job and assignments. The periphery always follows the center, not vice versa.





## The knack of time perception

Albert Einstein says that there is no singular entity called time but it is a space-time continuum, a four-dimensional coordinate system in which physical events are located with 3 dimensions of space and 1 of time inextricably mixed. He says time is a dimension of space. Space is always there, unchanging. As time is a dimension of space, it is also unchanging. You can experience this existentially when you abide in your center by witnessing time directly *as it is*. Once you know or get this *knack* of being existentially indifferent (due to *viveka*) *as it is*, you are the master of yourself and your time. It is a *knack* because it is not a technique to learn. A *knack* cannot be learned or taught. You have simply to sit and feel it in *silence* to know how you can become indifferent.

With you abiding in your center, everything is perceived self-evidently true and as present. Time is always *present*.