



THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY A COMPREHENSIVE INTRODUCTORY COURSE

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Chapter Outline

1. Historical overview/key ideas
2. The nature of existence
3. The dual nature of the mind
4. Transcendence as an ethic
5. H.P. Blavatsky's contribution to the tradition

The course is available in print for \$20 postage included. Email or phone The Theosophical Society in Australia to Order.



The Perennial Philosophy is:



An integrated

- ❖ Metaphysic
- ❖ Psychology
- ❖ And Ethic

Based on the fundamental unity
of all life

It is called “perennial” because of its:



- ❖ Age, its
- ❖ Universality and its
- ❖ Consistency

It has existed in an unbroken line since time immemorial and will likely remain long after passing fads and fashions have come and gone from the world of philosophy

Characteristic Features

- ❖ A sense of the sacred
- ❖ Contemplation and self-examination
- ❖ A different way of being in the world, and a different way of seeing the world



Huxley's definition



According to Aldous Huxley the **perennial philosophy** is

- ❖ A metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds
- ❖ A psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality
- ❖ And an ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being

(Huxley A. *The Perennial Philosophy*. London, Chatto & Windus: 1947, p.1)

The Primacy of Unity



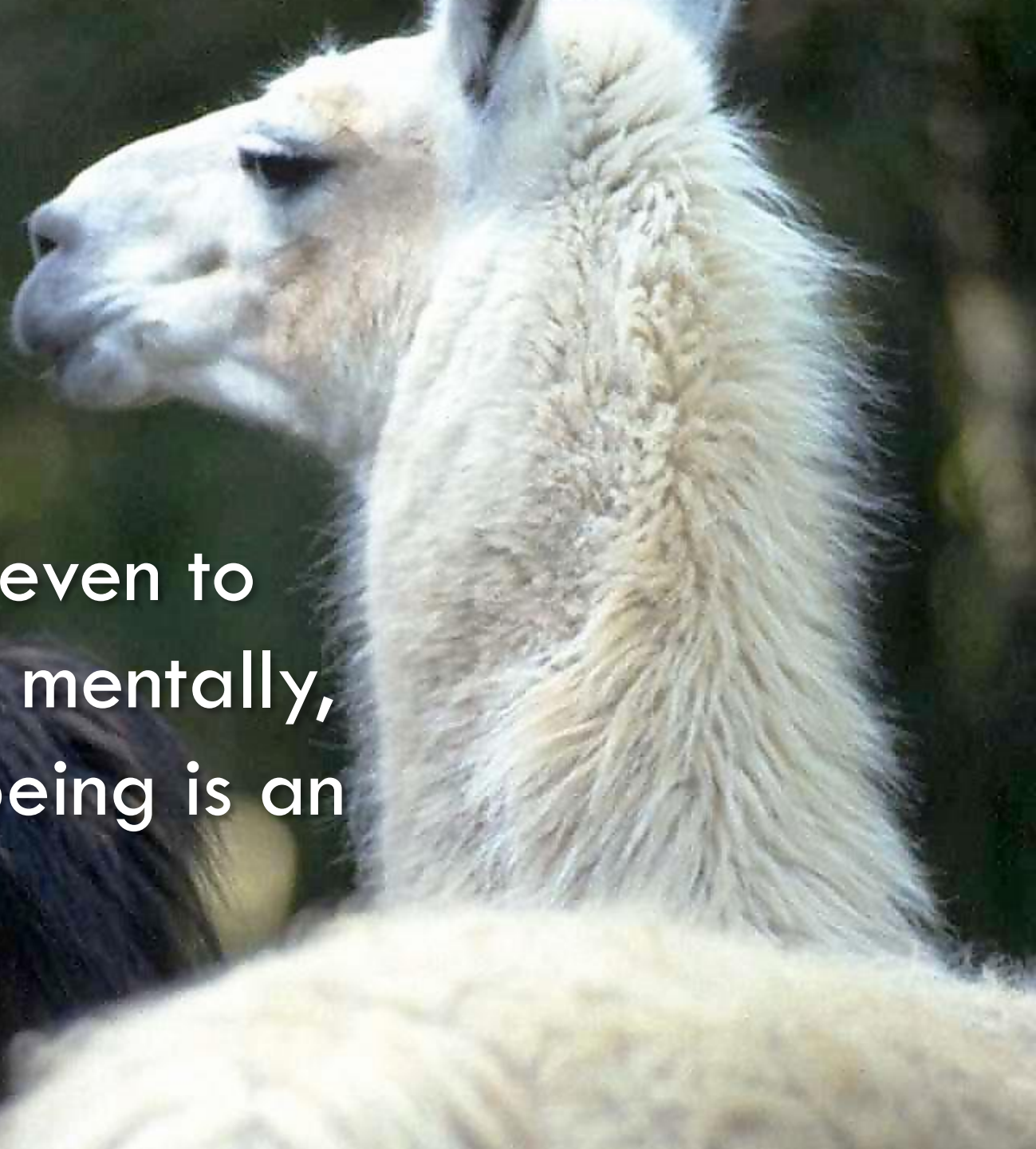
There is a unity to the cosmos that is deeply real, although not immediately obvious.

It takes training and insight to see it.

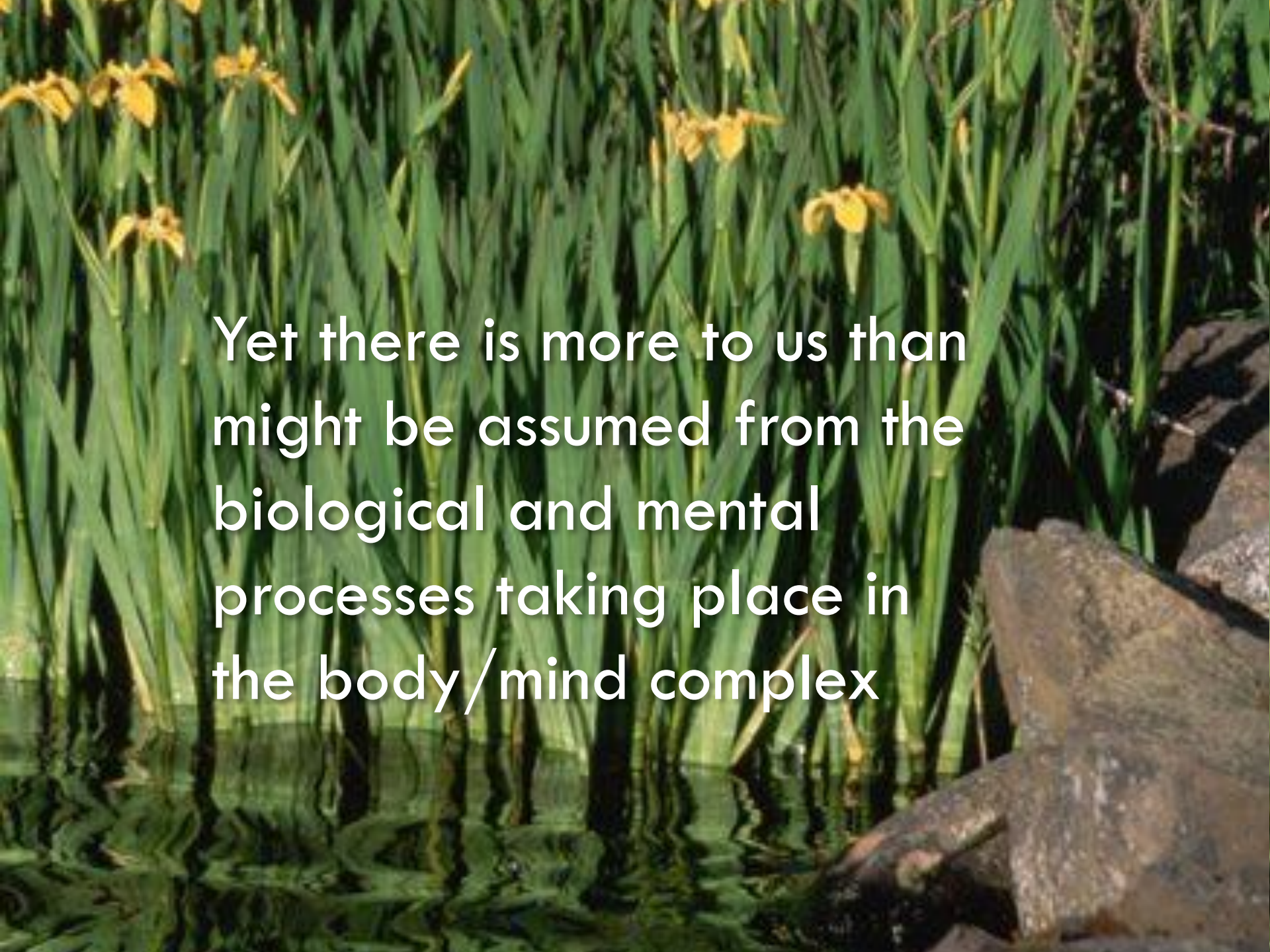
A painting depicting a scene of teaching. On the left, a guru with a long white beard and a yellow turban sits cross-legged on a white mat. He is wearing a yellow robe and is looking towards a group of children. The children, of various ethnicities and ages, are sitting on the ground around him, listening attentively. Some are resting their heads on their hands, while others look directly at the guru. In the background, there is a building with a red door and a blue pillar topped with a bull sculpture. The scene is set outdoors on a paved area with some shadows cast on the ground.

Which brings us to
the question

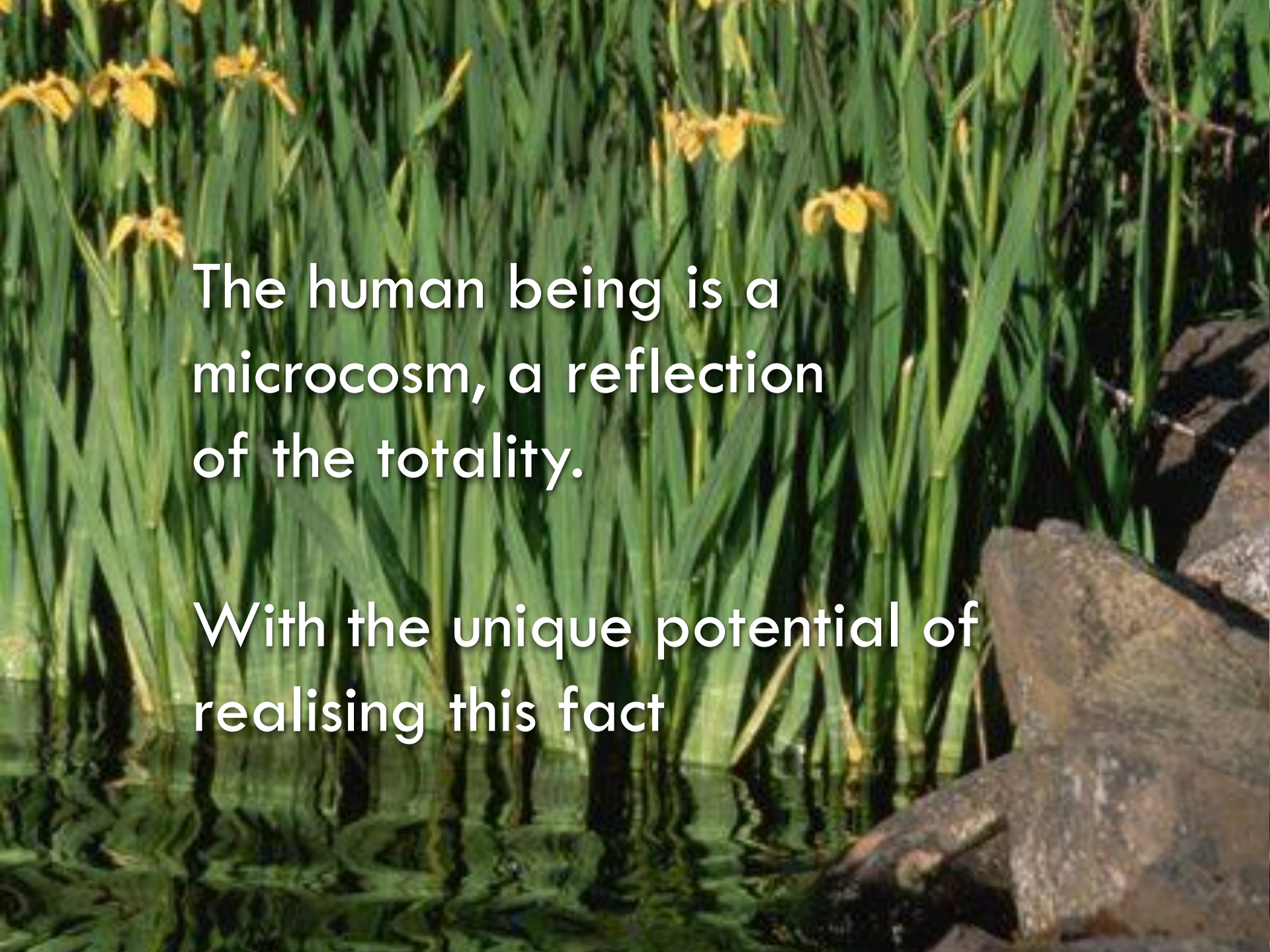
What is a human being?



Bodily, and even to
some extent mentally,
the human being is an
animal

A photograph of a pond with several yellow iris flowers and their long green leaves. The water in the foreground is dark and reflects the plants. Large, dark rocks are visible on the right side of the frame.

Yet there is more to us than
might be assumed from the
biological and mental
processes taking place in
the body/mind complex



The human being is a
microcosm, a reflection
of the totality.

With the unique potential of
realising this fact



THE TRICK FOR US HOWEVER

**IS TO BALANCE TWO EQUALLY REAL
BUT OPPOSING FORCES**

OUR UNIQUE POTENTIAL



There is within us a reality
that is the source
of the cosmos itself

- Seyyed Hossein Nasr

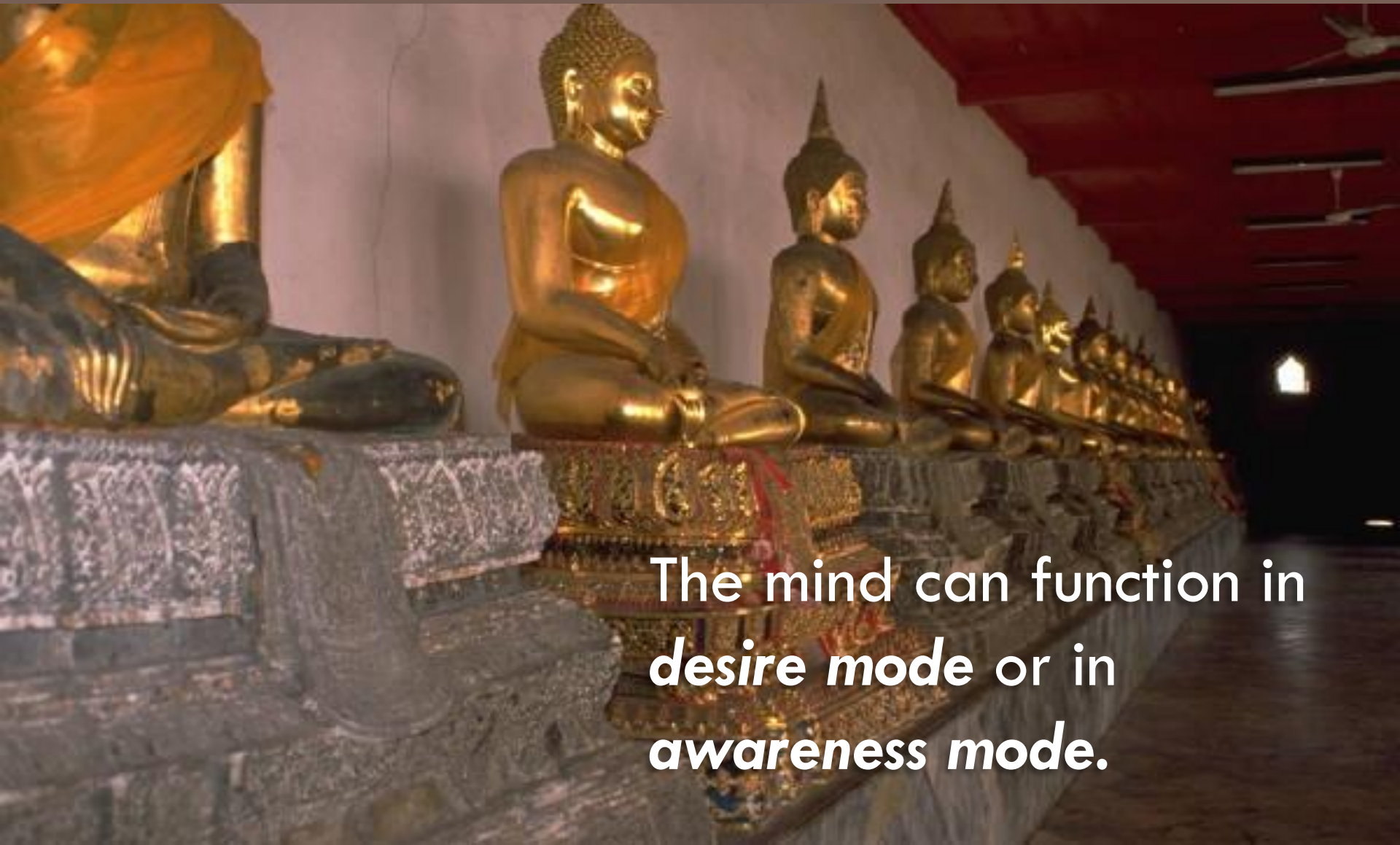
And our inherent limitations

There is something about human consciousness that makes it dull, unreceptive, resistant to change and intractably stubborn.

That something is thought
- our nemesis



THE DUAL NATURE OF THE MIND



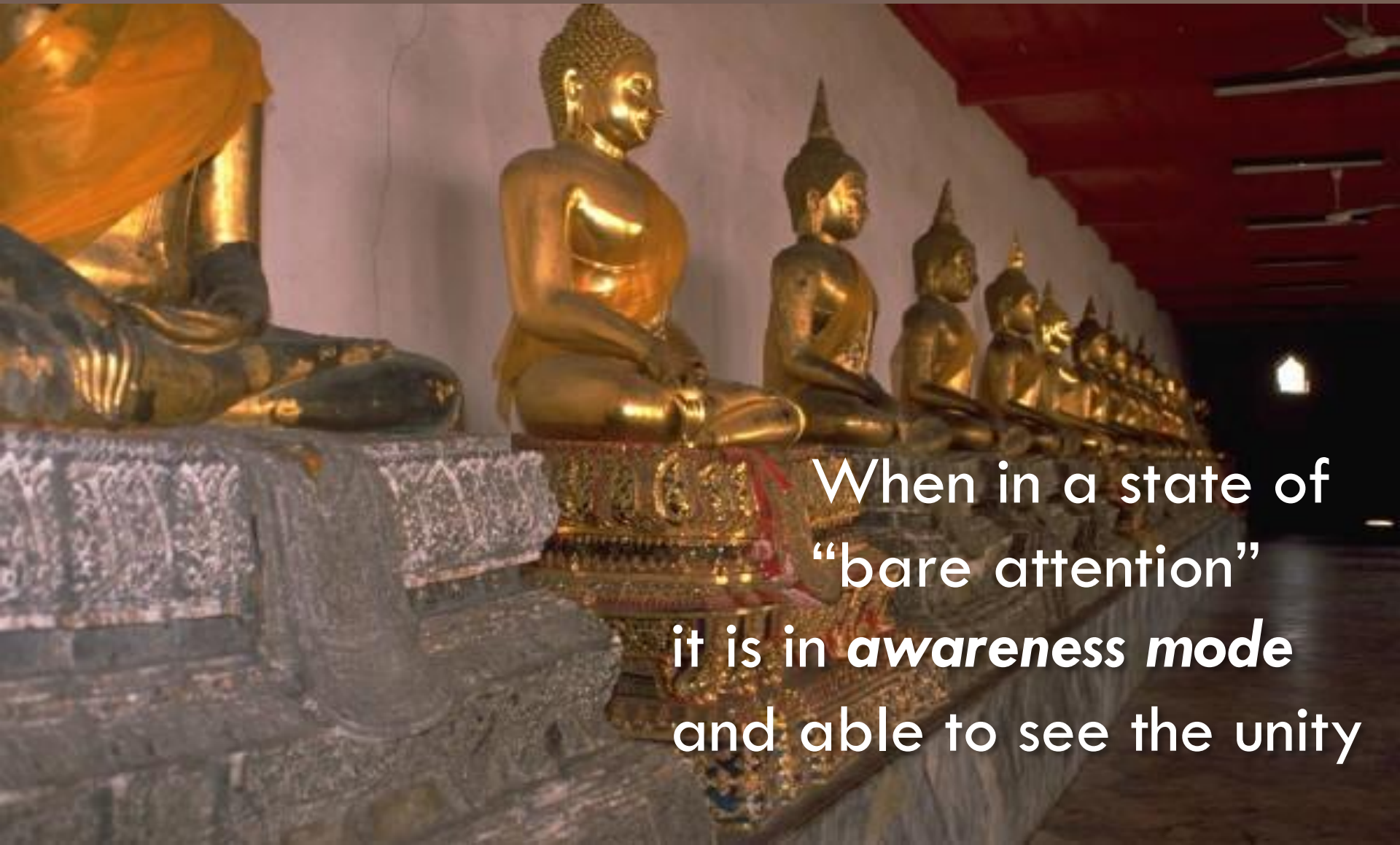
The mind can function in *desire mode* or in *awareness mode*.

THE DUAL NATURE OF THE MIND

A photograph of a long, receding row of golden Buddha statues seated in a meditative posture on a stone platform. The statues are arranged in a perspective that leads the eye towards a dark, illuminated doorway at the end of the hall. The lighting is warm, highlighting the metallic sheen of the statues. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

When dealing with the differences of matter and affected by them the mind is in *desire mode*

THE DUAL NATURE OF THE MIND



When in a state of
“bare attention”
it is in *awareness mode*
and able to see the unity



Basically it all comes down to order in
consciousness

A place for everything and everything in its
place

Order in consciousness implies

We understand
the structure of
consciousness and
the process of
thought



Order in consciousness implies

We can tell the
real from the
unreal, the
changing from the
eternal, the finite
from the infinite



Then things fall into place



quite naturally

To put thought into that sort of order

Requires
that we
pay
attention
to it



Contemplation is paramount

Whether in consciousness
or in terms of the
environment -

Order depends largely
on the quality, the extent
and the depth of our
seeing

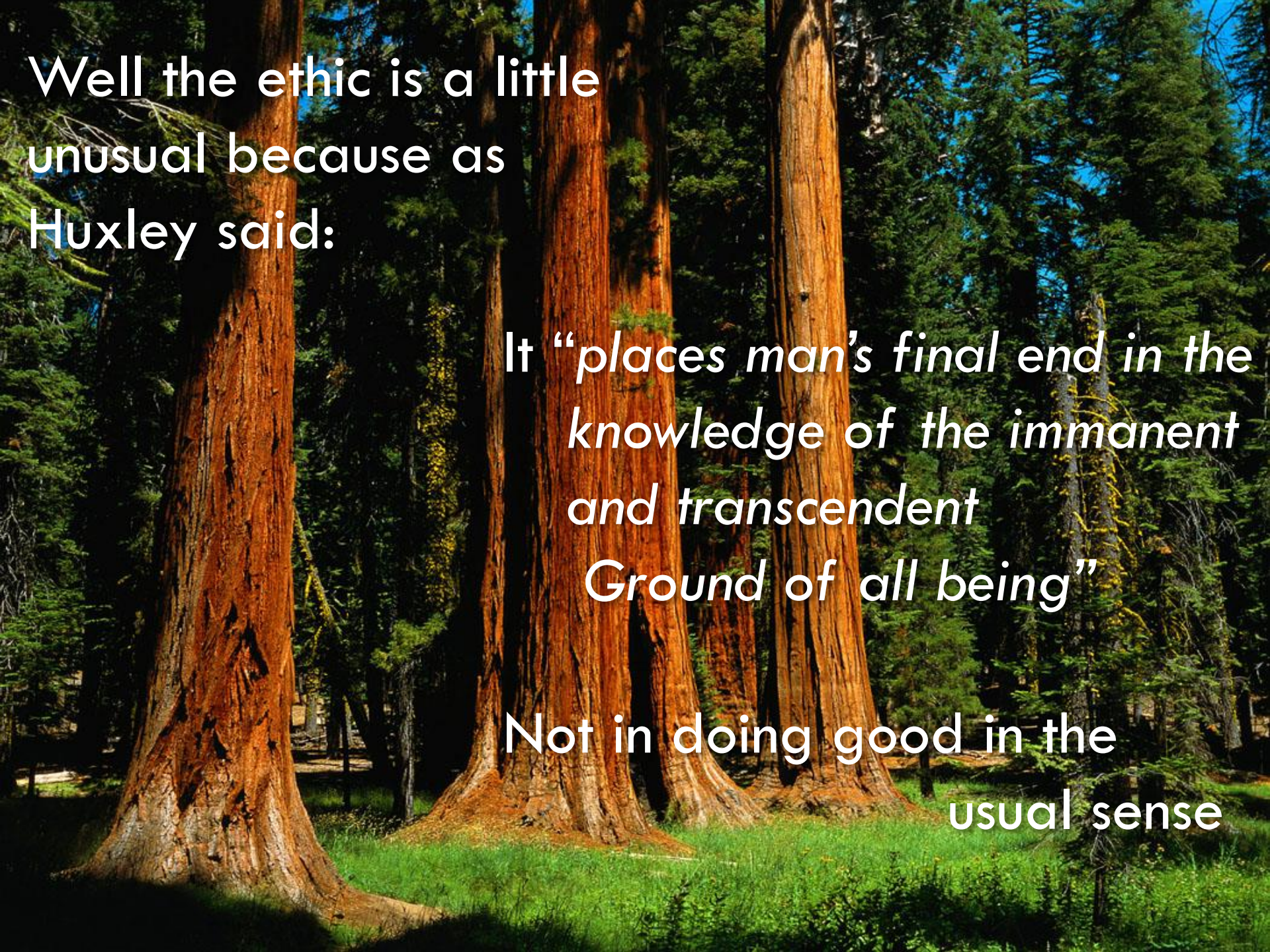


And what about the Ethics?



Do unto others?

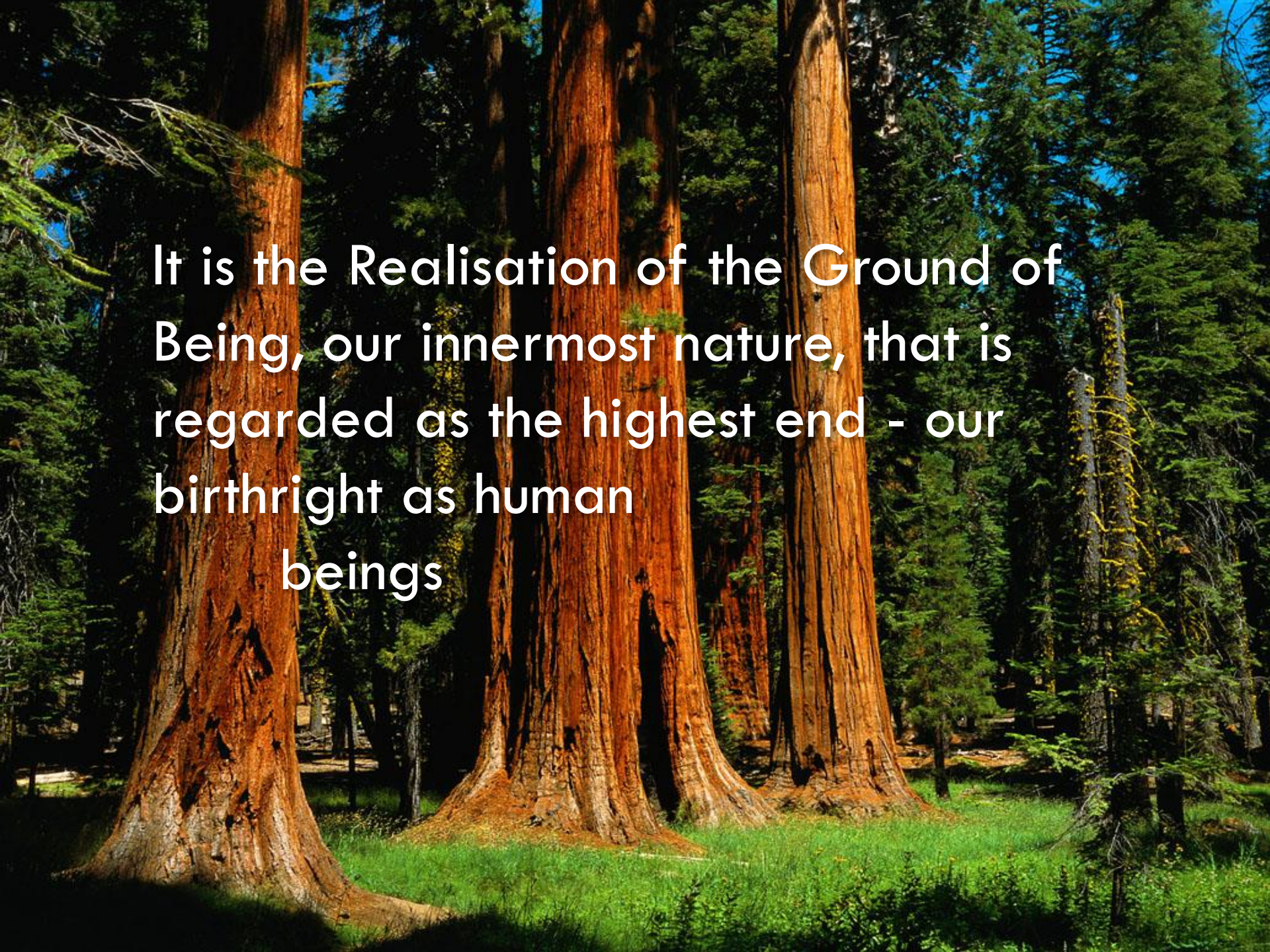
I cannot flourish unless my neighbour flourishes?



Well the ethic is a little
unusual because as
Huxley said:

It “*places man’s final end in the
knowledge of the immanent
and transcendent
Ground of all being*”

Not in doing good in the
usual sense



It is the Realisation of the Ground of
Being, our innermost nature, that is
regarded as the highest end - our
birthright as human
beings

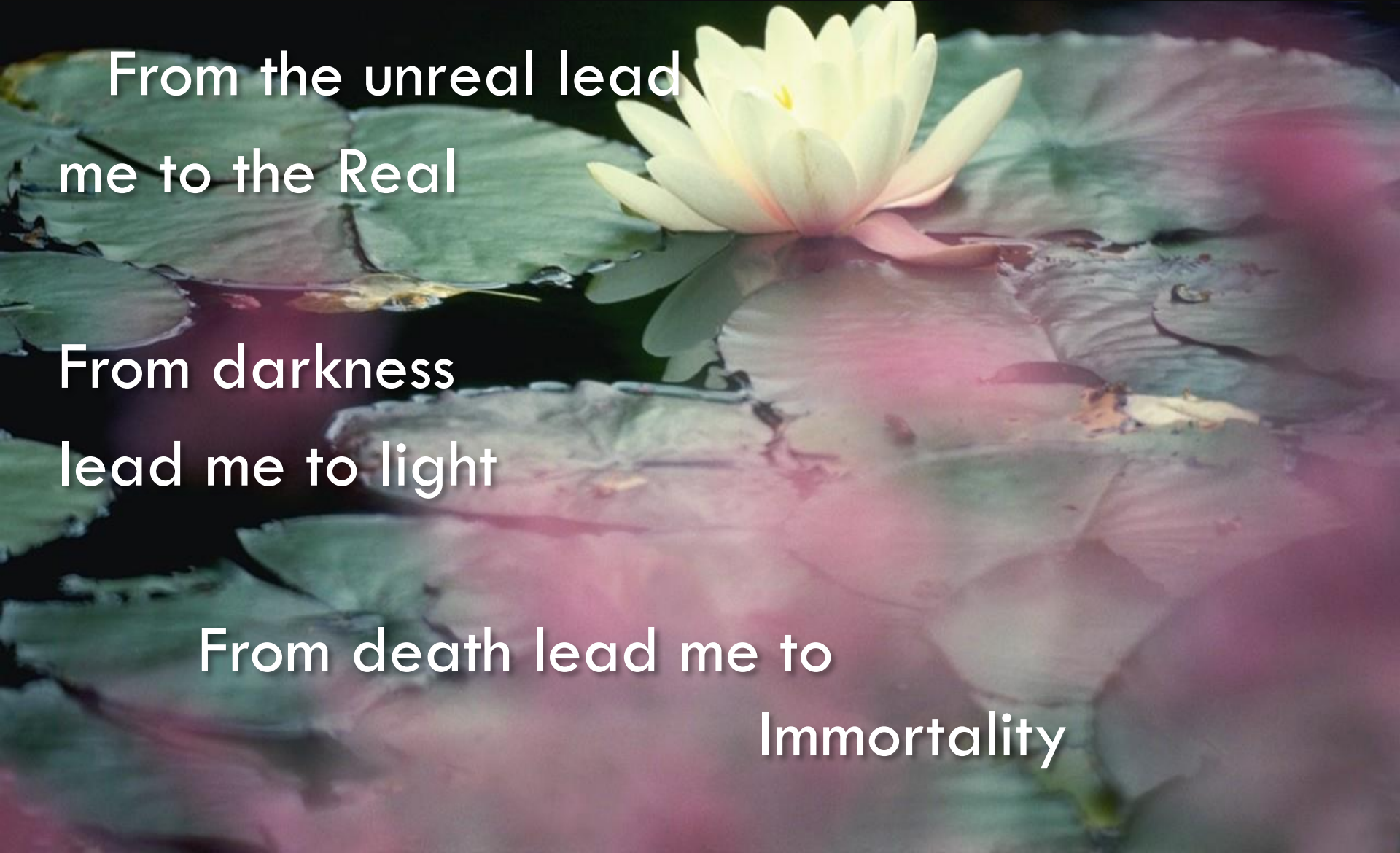
Finally ... *a prayer*

to sum up the spirit of the philosophy

From the unreal lead
me to the Real

From darkness
lead me to light

From death lead me to
Immortality



..... And a joke

What did the mystic say to
the hot-dog vendor?

Make me one with everything.

- *Laurence Kushner*