

Integral Spirituality Engages All Three Faces of Spirit

- In 3rd person, Spirit is known as *It*. You *contemplate* and perhaps *serve* Spirit, the ultimate mystery of existence, and the total Kosmos, including the very Ground of Being, often through nature, mysticism, philosophy, and *action*.
- In 2nd person, Spirit is known as *You* or *Thou*. You open to and *commune* with Spirit or the ultimate mystery of existence, often through *prayer*.
- In 1st person, Spirit is known as *I*. You *awaken* consciously as inseparable from Spirit, the ultimate mystery of existence, often through *meditation*.

That which is Ultimate is ultimately beyond all perspectives. But it can only be pointed to *via* perspectives. Each of these perspectives offers something unique to our awareness and growth.

In 3rd-person contemplation, you see *It*. You open your eyes, mind, and senses to the ultimate mystery of existence, and thus notice details and distinctions (for example, the patterns, energies, colors, textures, and contours of natural places, creatures, and other living things, or even the perspectives pointed out in philosophy, including this discussion about the 3 Faces of Spirit). In contemplation you become aware of the fullness of Spirit and the Kosmos in more of its rich and miraculous multidimensionality—gross, subtle, and causal. Moved by this vision people often actively *serve* others and Spirit.

Familiar examples: art, nature mysticism, philosophical and mystical contemplation, service. The path of good works.

In 2nd-person prayer and communion, you open into intimate contact with the ultimate mystery of existence, letting *It* become *Thou*. You metaphorically face God, your ultimate Beloved, and become knowable to (not hiding from) that ultimate consciousness. In the process your

feeling heart and soul cannot remain untouched or immune. You allow yourself to receive grace, or the blessings of the mystery of existence. You open, deepen, and surrender.

Familiar examples: prayer, heartfelt consent to the presence of God, devotional singing, worship, ritual, and service. The path of bhakti yoga.

In 1st-person meditation, you come to know yourself to be the I of Spirit. You let go of all limited identifications with memories, thoughts, sensations, and desires, and awaken consciously *as* the I AMness of the here and now. You awaken into and as the total present moment, *as* the Self, the non-separate identity of the mystery of existence, and even beyond all conceptions, into what is sometimes called the Suchness or the emptiness that is not separable from anything or anyone.

Familiar examples: Big Mind, vipassana, shikantaza, dzogchen, nirvikalpa and sahaj samadhis; all approaches to formless meditation.

Many practices **combine** two or more of these perspectives.