

# The Paradox of Consciousness

## A Journey Through Ego, Suffering, and Meaning

*Parthasarathy M*



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# Dedication

*To all those who question  
and understand that not having answers  
can be more valuable than certainty.*



# Epigraph

*"All I know is I know nothing!"*

— Socrates

*"There is no suffering in this world but in your mind."*

— Parthasarathy M



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# Preface

**A**LL I KNOW is I know nothing! This sentiment, borrowed from Socrates, forms the foundation of my philosophical inquiry. Through these pages, I explore the fundamental questions that arise when we examine human existence with genuine curiosity rather than predetermined answers. This work does not claim to present definitive truths but rather invites you into a conversation about the nature of consciousness, meaning, and our place in the universe.

What follows is not a systematic philosophy constructed through academic rigor, but rather a series of interconnected reflections born from observation and introspection. I have more questions than answers—I am, as you will see, more of a "questions guy." Why do we do what we do? What does anyone actually want? Why do I feel like something is missing always? These questions form the backbone of this exploration.

This book presents a philosophy centered on several key premises: the dissolution of ego as a path to authenticity, the reconsideration of our relationship with materialism, the importance of reducing suffering, and the search for meaning in a seemingly absurd existence. Through examining these themes, I hope to establish a framework for living that honors both rational thought and the mysterious nature of consciousness.



# CHAPTER !1

## The Question of Existence

Why do people don't have the questions like "what is anything?" why do they what they do?

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—From the author's original notes

### 1.1 The Fundamental Questions

Why do I think philosophy is important? I don't understand why more people don't ask questions like "what is anything?" or why they do what they do. These fundamental questions about existence seem obvious to me, yet many move through life without examining them.

The question of why we exist—why anything exists—remains perhaps the most profound mystery. Just by existing, I question whether there is any actual good we serve to society. If that's considered the purpose of life, then what does that mean for those who serve no obvious social function? If you argue that any meaning given to life is subjective, then nobody can call anyone else successful or unsuccessful by any objective measure.

*What makes us like something and hate something else? Why do we get tensed about something but later don't care much about it? I mean, I don't understand myself sometimes.*

I occasionally come to the conclusion that we can never know anything for sure. Perhaps that's the only certain knowledge—that certainty itself is unattainable.

If life is subjective—if meaning is created rather than discovered—then perhaps we can criticize others’ choices only when they hurt others. This principle of non-harm seems fundamental. Yet immediately I must question: why do I believe this? What makes the prevention of suffering more meaningful than any other possible value?

## 1.2 The Paradox of Morality

Hurting others seems inherently wrong, yet we institutionalize punishment in our justice systems. What is the driving force behind anyone’s actions? Are we all fundamentally selfish? If so, how do we explain those we consider selfless—people who have sacrificed greatly for others? But why do people sacrifice anything at all? What connects two persons so deeply that they’re ready to die to save another? Yet when someone wants to end their own life, we pathologize the desire, treating it as illness as long as there are any exceptions to their suffering.

These questions reveal the contradictions in our moral intuitions and social structures. They expose the complex interplay between individual consciousness and collective meaning-making that defines human existence.

# CHAPTER !2

## Identity and Division

I don't know what is even "me" -  
If everyone feels like me what  
will happen to the world?

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—From the author's original  
notes

### 2.1 The Question of the Self

What about religions, castes, races, languages? I don't know precisely how these divisive groups formed historically, but I question their current utility. I sometimes don't even know what constitutes "me"—if everyone experienced this lack of solid identity, what would happen to the world?

What if courts and international bodies truly stopped all wars? Why do we need armies and nuclear weapons when we have already caused so much suffering? Why do I feel humans are the major cause for most suffering in the world? Who gave humanity such power to alter and destroy?

This extends even to our relationships with other beings. Why do we have pets of particular breeds but fail to extend the same care to strays? Our selective compassion reveals inconsistencies in our moral frameworks.

### 2.2 The Illusion of Separation

The question of identity—what constitutes the "self"—lies at the heart of many philosophical traditions. The Buddhist concept of anatta (no-self) suggests what we consider our identity is merely an illusion—a collection of changing physical and mental processes with no permanent essence. Perhaps this insight offers a way forward from the divisiveness created by rigid identity constructs.

*As far as I understand it, we seek others because our brains evolved during times when survival depended on group belonging. Historically, our chance of survival depended on our ability to stay in groups. But now that conditions have changed, we haven't fully adapted.*

We still crave connection for reasons rooted in ancient survival mechanisms rather than present needs.

I believe if more people were more rational and less egoistic, life would improve dramatically. If everyone embraced selflessness—putting others' needs on equal footing with their own—how could crime or conflict exist? This isn't mere idealism but a logical conclusion: genuine selflessness would eliminate most harmful behaviors.

# CHAPTER !3

## The Paradox of Desire

Money is the single most reason  
for many problems.

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—From the author's original  
notes

### 3.1 The Biology of Pleasure

Why are we lustful beings? Is it purely biological—for the procreation of the species? But if so, why does it consume so much of our consciousness?

Sex represents the most pleasurable experience an organism can naturally achieve. But why? If there were no incentive, why would anyone waste resources, time, and energy to create offspring? The pleasure exists as nature's reward system—essentially treating us like dogs receiving treats for performing tricks. But this raises deeper questions: why procreate at all? What purpose does perpetuating consciousness serve?

Speaking of attention—everything ultimately reduces to chemistry. I may have conditions like OCD or depression, I may associate ideas unusually, but what I've come to understand is that we all fundamentally seek attention in various forms. I'm in no position to judge this, but I observe that just as water is essential for physical survival, recognition and connection seem essential for psychological survival.

### 3.2 The Illusion of Money

I don't fully understand the mechanisms of attraction—why certain physical features draw us to others beyond mere reproductive potential. The mystery

of attraction, like many aspects of consciousness, resists complete rational explanation.

Money represents perhaps the strangest human creation—a symbolic system that has come to dominate real existence. It's the word I hate most. I don't understand our obsession with wealth, status symbols, and external validation. In the end, all addiction—whether to substances, behaviors, or status—boils down to chemicals in the brain. Except for perhaps the most disciplined spiritual practitioners, every person has addictions because controlling all urges represents perhaps the greatest challenge humans can undertake.

*I have a dream where there is no concept of money - where you can have anything you want - free of money as long as you do something useful.*

Self-fulfillment is what everyone ultimately seeks. But what constitutes fulfillment varies dramatically between individuals. Perhaps silence and solitude represent what we secretly crave—maybe that's what brings true peace. Maybe being alone with our authentic selves, free from social performance, offers the deepest satisfaction.

# CHAPTER !4

## Intention and Authenticity

Art is a channel through which  
the soul communicates.

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—From the author's original  
notes

### 4.1 The Meaning of Action

Why do we do things—especially things meant for others to see or appreciate? If such actions ultimately serve no lasting purpose, why engage in them? We do them because we derive satisfaction from them—intention matters more than outcome.

Why do people want to be praised, liked, loved? I believe these desires connect fundamentally to our evolved survival mechanisms. Recognition from others historically meant protection, resource-sharing, and reproductive opportunities. We're still driven by these ancient imperatives even in our modern context.

Yet most things we do to showcase ourselves—social media posts, status displays, consumption patterns—ultimately provide no lasting value. This isn't to say self-expression lacks meaning, but rather that expression motivated primarily by external validation differs fundamentally from authentic creation.

### 4.2 Flow and Authenticity

If I contradict myself—which I inevitably will—that's acceptable. Being human inherently involves contradiction. Creative expression represents one of the few exceptions to my critique of external validation because true artistic expression comes from an authentic inner source rather than social performance.

The flow state—that condition where we become so absorbed in an activity that we lose self-consciousness—represents perhaps the most authentic mode of being. In flow, we are egoless and true.

Art functions as a channel through which the soul communicates. It's abstract, defying complete explanation. Perhaps art needs primarily to satisfy the creator, giving them meaning and a sense of importance. But why? This remains mysterious.

I still don't understand many of my preferences—why I like certain songs, views, smells, foods, or plays. Why do these things make us feel good? Perhaps they've evolved as psychological rewards to guide beneficial behaviors, or perhaps they connect to deeper aspects of consciousness we haven't yet mapped.

# CHAPTER !5

## Suffering and Purpose

There is no suffering in this world but in your mind.

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—From the author's original notes

### 5.1 The Purpose of Pleasure

Sex, like most biological functions, has clear evolutionary purpose. But the reason it feels pleasurable implies purpose behind the pleasure itself. This suggests either design or emergent properties that functionally resemble purpose.

A theory on sadness (which I call "Mother's theory"): There may be no fundamental difference between happiness and sadness—both represent energy rushes of different qualities. Hunger, sex, fear—all constitute different forms of arousal that move us to action.

Why would nature design us with desires that lead us to destroy nature itself? Plants produce fruits with seeds to reproduce—a clear evolutionary strategy. But humans' evolved capacities have led to environmental destruction that threatens the very systems that produced us. This paradox suggests either a flaw in evolutionary processes or the need for a higher level of consciousness to transcend our destructive impulses.

### 5.2 Religion and Selfishness

Regarding religion—I don't know exactly what historical factors gave rise to religious belief, but I question why concepts of gods emerged across cultures. What is "god" conceptually? Does merely thinking there's a divine presence make us happier? The multitude of religious conflicts suggests the diversity of

gods creates division rather than unity. Perhaps the truth lies in recognizing that god is everything and anything is god—a pantheistic view that might resolve religious conflicts by eliminating the divisiveness of specific theological claims.

*Why do people pray to god - Even these people are selfish? Why do people celebrate festivals - they pray for something that they want but nobody cares about others apart from their family.*

People celebrate festivals and observe traditions, yet they frequently pray only for what they personally want. Few genuinely care about others beyond their immediate family. Everyone seems to want health, wealth, and happiness for themselves and their close relations, with little concern for universal wellbeing.

Similarly, we throw trash from our homes to keep our personal spaces clean but show little concern for the Earth as a whole. This selective caring reveals profound inconsistency in our moral frameworks. Why are humans so selfish? And conversely, why doesn't everyone help everyone most of the time, given that cooperation would benefit all?

# CHAPTER !6

## Ethics of Being

Ego dissolution - Avoid "I"  
whenever possible, it's good for  
you and the world.

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—From the author's original  
notes

### 6.1 Principles for Ethical Living

The core ethical principle that emerges from these reflections is simple: Act in ways that reduce suffering. Don't add to the suffering of others.

I sometimes feel we've done many metaphorical PhDs—accumulated vast knowledge—before even starting to live authentically. What's wrong with people? Why do we complicate existence?

A few principles for meaningful living emerge:

1. **Ego Dissolution**—avoid self-centeredness whenever possible. Minimizing the "I" benefits both yourself and the world.
2. **Money**—use it as a tool but don't die for it. Don't cheat others for it. Don't obsessively bargain. If nobody haggled, everyone would sell things for fair prices (though we might question what constitutes a "fair" price in different contexts).

The questions I've raised have created more questions than answers. This mirrors Kant's approach: if everyone followed their principles consistently, how could problems arise? The answer lies in inconsistency between stated values and actions.

## 6.2 Practical Guidelines

The simplest ethical guideline: Help others. Be kind. Know that anything can hurt anyone at any time, so:

- Think before speaking
- Discuss only necessary matters
- Avoid gossip
- Talk less (though everyone speaks freely when comfortable)

True beauty exists in authenticity—you are beautiful as you are, without needing fancy products or cosmetic enhancements. Even with perceived "flaws" like baldness, excess weight, skin conditions—your authentic self possesses inherent beauty.

*A rational person would likely agree with these principles, not because I state them, but because they emerge logically from examining human experience.*

# CHAPTER !7

## Death and Consciousness

What is death - loss of feelings, loss of memories, loss of emotions, thought -> does that mean dissociation is mini death?

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—From the author's original notes

### 7.1 Contemplating Mortality

We all die someday, so worrying about death simply creates unnecessary suffering. However, suicide is wrong primarily because it transfers suffering to others rather than eliminating it.

The discourse around suicide remains complex—I don't claim definitive answers here. Camus explored this in "The Myth of Sisyphus," suggesting we must imagine Sisyphus happy despite his eternal punishment. Is life suffering? Many philosophical traditions suggest it is. But does that justify ending it?

I sometimes find myself in states where I don't know what to do but feel compelled to do something. This restlessness characterizes much of human experience.

Consider Buddha, who left his kingdom despite having everything materially needed. Why? Perhaps he recognized that material comfort doesn't address existential questions. Maybe he wasn't confused but rather saw clearly that conventional existence obscures deeper truth.

### 7.2 Meaning and Identity

Many assume we should be patriotic, but I question this too. Despite limited formal study of religion, I observe that morality doesn't emerge from religious

doctrine but rather from rationality itself. Ethical principles can be derived through reason without supernatural foundations.

I identify myself as someone who believes in "enough"—sufficiency rather than excess. Even if science provides frameworks for morality, reason remains the tool that makes anyone better.

Am I describing a utopia? Perhaps. But maybe ideal systems represent valuable thought experiments even when practically unattainable.

Human needs end when we understand we don't need most things we desire. I once met someone (my friend John) who offered a striking perspective when I asked why we're alive. He simply said: "We are born, we can't die instantly, so we live." This tautological answer contains a certain stripped-down wisdom.

What constitutes death? Loss of feelings, memories, emotions, thoughts. Does this suggest dissociation represents a kind of partial death—moments when consciousness fragments or disconnects? The irony remains that we have reasons for everything except why we live.

Life indeed has meaning, but that meaning doesn't depend entirely on the individual—it emerges through interaction. Each person decides their meaning partly based on how others treat them.

# CHAPTER !8

## Connection and Solitude

Solitude is peace - but not everybody can understand.

—From the author's original notes

### 8.1 The Paradox of Human Relation

Why do we hurt others? This question haunts me. Every day I ask myself if I've hurt anyone, knowing harm often occurs unintentionally.

What purpose does marriage serve? Why do we marry? Perhaps when someone is alone, they overthink, so partnerships provide balance. The concept of "couples" may offer psychological stability through shared experience.

Logically speaking, I sometimes see no reason to talk to anyone—not even myself—without examining the purpose of communication. My moods fluctuate—sometimes I feel optimistic about life, but frequently waves of sadness overwhelm me.

I sometimes feel I have more ego than I recognize. Other times I think I degrade myself too much. This oscillation between pride and self-criticism characterizes much of human experience.

### 8.2 Solitude and Recognition

Solitude offers peace, though not everyone understands this. The capacity to be alone with oneself represents psychological strength rather than weakness.

*I wonder about anonymous scientists, poets, and high achievers who avoid*

*recognition. If they don't seek acknowledgment, what motivates their work?*

Regret functions as poison, killing us from inside. If you've done something harmful, realized it, and suffered consequences, understand that you are no longer accountable for that action. You've changed—even if causally you performed the action, the "you" existing now differs from the "you" who acted then.

Try living only in the present. Whatever happened previously—whether wonderful or terrible—exists now only in memory. Thoughts about past and future create suffering that present-moment awareness can dissolve.

# CHAPTER !9

## The Conditioned Self

If everything I do, think and react is because of the genes, the place I born, the think I know the childhood and the surrounding then what is me?

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—From the author's original notes

### 9.1 The Question of Identity

All our beliefs, ideas, thoughts, behaviors, and character traits arise from conditioning. I sometimes feel easily manipulated because I recognize this. If everything I do, think, and feel stems from my genes, birthplace, childhood experiences, and environment, what constitutes the "real me" apart from these influences?

Why do people possess such pride in being "right" while considering others "wrong"? They believe they know everything while actually knowing very little. What makes anything right or wrong beyond socially constructed values?

Perhaps we're meant to be selfish, working through our own understanding rather than adopting others' perspectives. Maybe that's our redemption—finding authentic experience through questioning received wisdom.

### 9.2 Fundamental Questions

How do I know what I know is correct? Do I or we have reasons for our beliefs? Consider what we call mental illness—why do certain states frighten us? Perhaps there's no suffering in the external world but only in the mind that perceives it.

Everything—dogs, cows, ants, humans—exists with an inherent right to freedom. We shouldn't shackle any conscious being.

# CHAPTER !10

## Beyond Answers

What if even philosophy is all about - bunch of unanswerable questions.

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—From the author's original notes

### 10.1 Questioning Philosophy Itself

Even avoiding Schopenhauer's arguments about the futility of existence, we end up questioning the point of being. Why do we do what we do? Why seek happiness and avoid sadness? Why need money? Why show off achievements? Why post on social media? What do we gain? And if social validation lacks genuine value, why write or publish anything—including these very words?

What if philosophy itself merely represents an elaborate engagement with unanswerable questions? What purpose does procreation serve beyond perpetuating consciousness that experiences both joy and suffering?

Life cannot maintain constant happiness—but why should life exist at all? Why does bacterial life exist? Why does consciousness exist? These identity crises extend beyond humans to existence itself.

### 10.2 The Mystery of Preference

Why are we attracted to certain things and repelled by others? Why choose some options while rejecting alternatives? These questions about preference reveal the mysterious nature of consciousness itself.

*Why we are attracted to something and hate other things? Why do we choose something and leave others?*

# Conclusion: A Philosophy of Enough

The philosophy that emerges from these reflections centers on several key principles:

1. **Ego Dissolution:** Reducing self-centeredness benefits both the individual and society.
2. **Minimizing Suffering:** The core ethical imperative involves reducing harm to oneself and others.
3. **Present Awareness:** Living fully in the present moment reduces unnecessary psychological suffering.
4. **Authentic Expression:** Creative expression represents one of the most meaningful human activities when done for its own sake.
5. **Rational Compassion:** Reason leads naturally to compassion when we recognize our interconnectedness.
6. **Sufficiency Over Excess:** Embracing "enough" rather than endless accumulation leads to greater satisfaction.
7. **Questioning Certainty:** Maintaining openness to being wrong prevents dogmatism and enables growth.

These principles don't offer easy answers to existence's mysteries, but they provide a framework for living meaningfully within uncertainty. By questioning our automatic behaviors, examining our conditioned reactions, and choosing deliberate responses, we can transcend the limitations of our programming.

The fundamental paradox remains: consciousness seeks meaning while simultaneously recognizing meaning's constructed nature. Perhaps embracing this paradox—living fully while knowing life's ultimate questions remain unanswerable—represents wisdom itself.

I have more questions than answers—but maybe that's precisely the point. In a universe where certainty remains elusive, the questioning itself becomes the most authentic response to existence's mystery.



# About the Author

The author is a philosopher and observer of human nature who believes that questioning is more valuable than answering. Through personal reflection and careful observation of everyday experience, they have developed a philosophical approach centered on ego dissolution, rational compassion, and the concept of "enough."

