

# The Seeming Paradox of Nonduality



## Introduction

In the exploration of nonduality, we are confronted with statements and teachings that seem paradoxical, and yet these paradoxes are central to the realization of the truth of nondual awareness. "There is nowhere to go," "There is nothing to do," and "Time is an artifact of thinking; space, an artifact of perceiving"—these are just a few of the concepts that, on the surface, seem to defy logic, but are rooted in the recognition of the unity of all existence.

In this article, we will explore these paradoxes and examine how the mind, with its limitations, often cannot grasp the nature of reality from a nondual perspective. This journey will challenge our deeply held beliefs about self, time, space, and the act of understanding itself. As we progress, we will draw on the wisdom of ancient texts like the *Upanishads*, the *Ashtavakra Gita*, and modern nondual teachers such as Rupert Spira and Jean Klein. We will also reference the poetry of Walter Cecchini, who captures the essence of these teachings in evocative verses. Through this exploration, you may find that what seems paradoxical at first glance becomes a doorway into a deeper, more intuitive knowing.

## Chapter 1: Nowhere to Go

The statement "There is nowhere to go" challenges the assumption that we must travel a path to reach enlightenment or truth. The mind, with its inherent need to move from point A to point B, struggles with the notion that we are already where we need to be. Nonduality teaches that the self we are seeking is not elsewhere—it is the very awareness that is present here and now. Walter Cecchini captures this in his poem *Take Heart, Seeker*:

*"You may feel lost  
but take heart, seeker  
you could never go  
where This is not."*

—Excerpted from "Take Heart, Seeker" in the book *Take Heart, Seeker* by Walter Cecchini.

There is no distance to travel because the seeker and the sought are one. Any movement toward a goal is illusory because it presupposes separation between the individual and the truth. The realization that there is nowhere to go dismantles the false idea that spiritual progress is linear.

## Chapter 2: Nothing to Do

The statement "There is nothing to do" similarly confounds the mind, which is conditioned to believe that action or effort is required to attain spiritual understanding. Nonduality, however, asserts that reality is already complete and whole; there is nothing lacking, and therefore no action is necessary to make it complete. Effort, in fact, may only serve to reinforce the illusion of a separate self that needs to "achieve" realization.

To truly understand nonduality, the effort to achieve or attain must dissolve. What remains is the pure awareness that effortlessly witnesses all actions and thoughts. From this place, all doing arises naturally, without the sense of an individual doer.

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## Chapter 3: Time as an Artifact of Thinking, Space as an Artifact of Perceiving

In the nondual teachings, time is often described as a creation of thought, while space is understood as a product of perception. Time, as we experience it, is a mental construct that arises from the constant comparison of past and future events. Similarly, space is a way of organizing perceptions and giving form to what is inherently formless.

This idea is encapsulated in the *Ashtavakra Gita*: "*Time is only an idea in your mind, and space is only an idea of separation. Neither time nor space touches the Self, which is beyond both.*" —*Ashtavakra Gita*, Chapter 1

When we see that both time and space are constructs of the mind, we realize that the Self, the pure awareness we are, transcends these limitations. In the silence of pure being, there is no time, no space—only the eternal now.

## Chapter 4: The Limitations of the Mind

The mind is a powerful tool, but it is not the right tool for investigating the nature of nonduality. The mind functions by dividing, categorizing, and naming experience, but nonduality points to the indivisible whole that is prior to and beyond thought. As long as one seeks to understand nonduality at the level of the mind, one will remain confounded, because the mind is inherently dualistic. This is illustrated in Cecchini's poem *What Lies Within*:

*"The mind chews  
on the bone  
of knowledge  
always hungry  
gnawing repetitively  
at smooth surfaces  
sensing more  
yet unaware  
of the nature  
of the marrow  
at the pithy center  
incapable of accessing  
what lies within."*

—Excerpted from *What Lies Within* in the book *The Temple of Silence* by Walter Cecchini.

Understanding this limitation leads us to rely less on intellectual concepts and more on direct experience, which cannot be grasped by the mind but is known intuitively.

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## Chapter 5: The Illusion of Surrender

The paradox of surrender is that it cannot be "done" by the individual. The very notion of surrender implies a separate self that is capable of taking action, but in nondual understanding, there is no such self to perform the act of surrender. Surrender is the natural outcome of seeing through the illusion of the separate self. Cecchini captures this in haiku form:

*“the doership sailed off  
pride, guilt, shame, the cargo  
no one waved goodbye”*

—From Walter's *Nondual Haiku* collection.

The moment we stop trying to surrender and instead simply recognize what is already here, surrender happens effortlessly.

## Chapter 6: Ignorance as Learned Through Repetition

Ignorance of our true nature is something that is learned through repeated identification with thoughts, emotions, and perceptions. Over time, this identification becomes habitual, and we forget our essential nature. Just as ignorance is learned, it can be unlearned through the repetition of self-inquiry, meditation, and mindful presence.

*“Drop your name  
and claims to fame  
let the deepening begin.”*

—Excerpted from *Settling In* in the book *The Temple of Silence* by Walter Cecchini.

## Chapter 7: The Threat of Dissolution

Nondual teachings often evoke a sense of fear or irritation in the mind. This is because the ego, the false sense of a separate self, instinctively recoils at the idea of its own dissolution. The ego fears its own extinction, yet this very extinction is what leads to liberation. Cecchini addresses this tension in his poem *Effigy*:

*“beliefs like straw  
to fuel the fire of Truth  
which ignites  
all that is not true  
immolation of  
an effigy”*

—Excerpted from *Effigy* in the book *The Temple of Silence* by Walter Cecchini.

The mind's resistance is a natural part of the process, but as we come to understand the illusory nature of the ego, the fear of dissolution gives way to peace.

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## Conclusion

In this exploration of the paradoxes of nonduality, we see that what appears contradictory to the mind is, in fact, a reflection of a deeper, non-conceptual truth. The statements "There is nowhere to go" and "There is nothing to do" point to the recognition that we are already the awareness we seek. Time and space are revealed to be constructs of the mind, and the limitations of the mind itself become evident. Through this understanding, we come to see that surrender is not something we can do; it is the natural result of recognizing the falsehood of the separate self.

Ultimately, nonduality invites us to rest in the silence that is always present, where all paradoxes dissolve and only the truth remains. As Cecchini writes:

*"Silence prior to all sound  
the fundamental ground."*

—Excerpted from *The Temple of Silence* in the book *The Temple of Silence* by Walter Cecchini.

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## Invitation to the Temple of Silence

### A Non-duality Zoom Group

Dear Friend,

You are warmly invited to join the **Temple of Silence**, an online Zoom group dedicated to exploring the essence of non-duality. In this gathering, we focus not on personal stories but on gently turning our attention to the boundless awareness that holds all stories and experiences within it—our true nature.

**The Temple of Silence Mission Statement:** *“The Temple of Silence Zoom group offers a decentralized space where friends gather, some seeking to realize their true nature, others resting in its recognition. Discussions focus less on fleeting personal stories and more on the reliable, wholeness of our True nature. Questions are welcomed, and when attention drifts into mental narratives, it is gently redirected to what never comes and goes. In this open space, all are invited to knowingly experience the oneness that underlies all appearances.”*

**When:** Open meeting on Wednesdays at 10:00 AM Eastern Time on ZOOM

**Meeting ID:** 935 829 6350

**Passcode:** tos

*The Temple of Silence Zoom Group is not a therapy group, and there is no charge to attend the meetings. This document is part of “The Temple of Silence - From Knowledge to Experience” article series and was created as a public service. For those new to nonduality, this series of articles offers clear guidance into this profound understanding. We hope the content resonates with the deeper truth within you. We look forward to your presence in our next gathering.*

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Please visit [www.beingwalter.com](http://www.beingwalter.com) for more nondual articles, poetry and information regarding Walter’s books “Take Heart, Seeker” and “The Temple of Silence”.