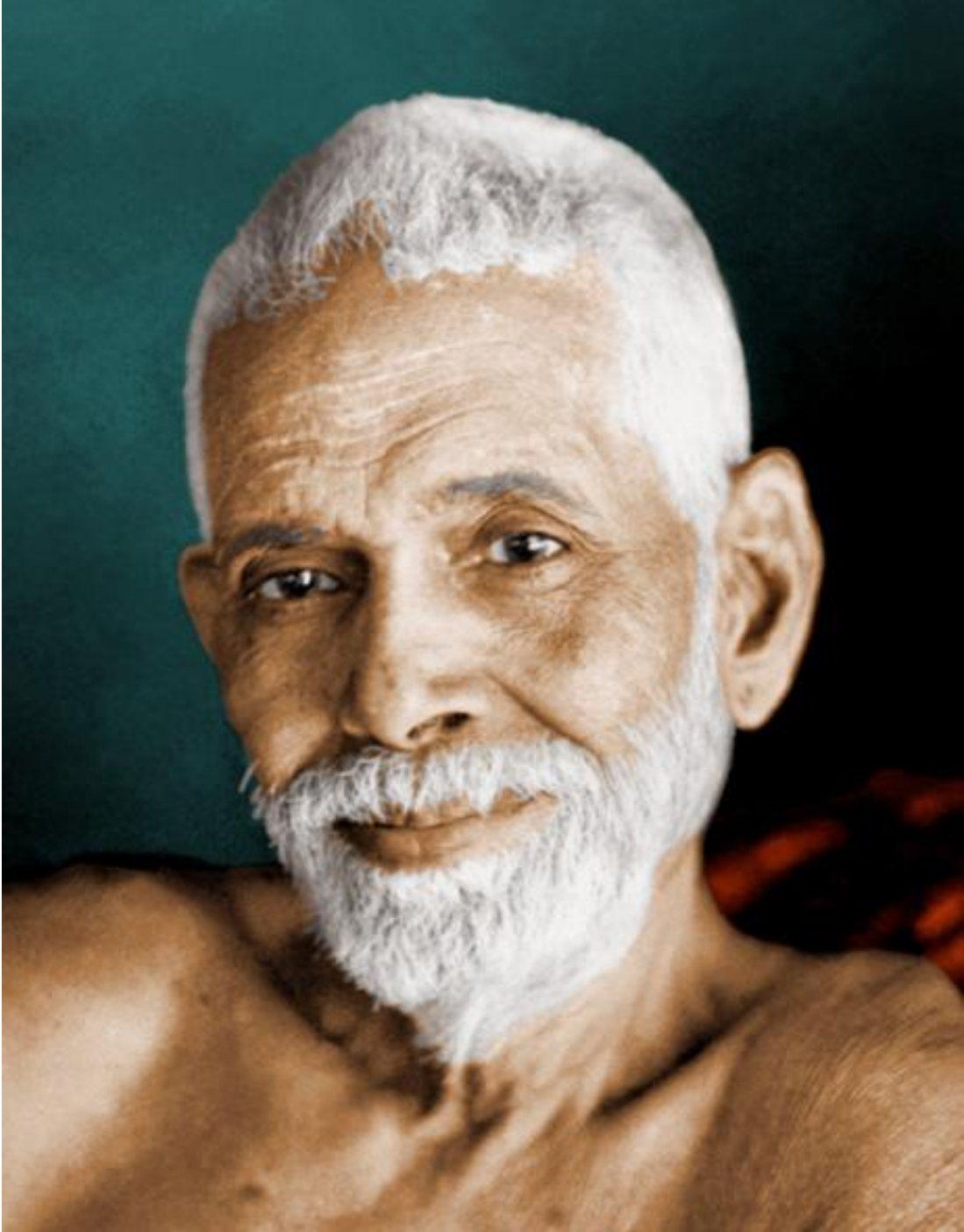


Autobiography of a Jnani

The real life story of an Indian householder and businessman-yogi, who awakens to Jnana over a three month period, and his relationship with his Advaita teacher in the double lineage of Robert Adams, Ramana Maharshi and Nisargadatta Maharaj. These dialogues prove that someone with family and a business can awaken even in the tumult of everyday life. His states and experiences are clearly described and explained, including Turiya and “waking sleep.”

Edward Muzika and Rajiv Kapur

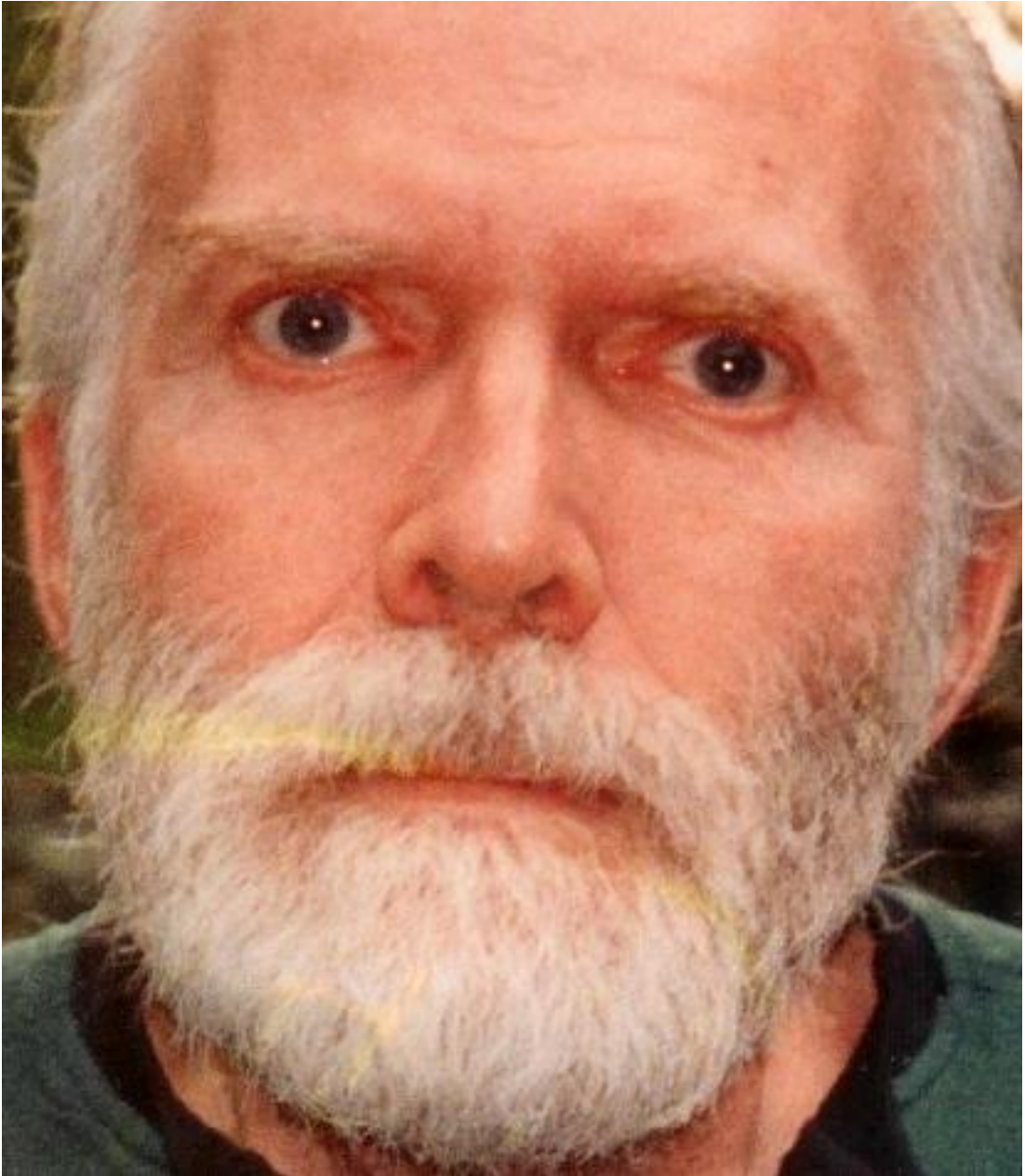
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Sri Ramana Maharshi



Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj



Robert Adams



Jean Dunn

INTRODUCTION

Paramhansa Yogananda performed a miracle for Western spirituality when he published *Autobiography of a Yogi* in the 1920s. It opened a whole new world for western truth seekers that was expanded years later by the coming of Zen and Tibetan Buddhism to America and the West.

What Yogananda's book did was reveal a way of exploring subjectivity than had been unavailable in the West, the world of yogic meditation and Raja Yoga. Many people have undergone Kriya initiation throughout the world since, and millions more have practiced Zen or other Buddhist forms of meditation. Yet, the goal is still missing in the minds of most. What is the purpose of meditation? What is the goal of spirituality?

During the past ten years or so, a third wave of Eastern spirituality has hit the West, the so called non-dual revolution, which comprises the teaching of Advaita Vedanta as well as Zen and Tibetan Dzogchen. Two giants of Advaita known worldwide are Ramana Maharshi and Nisargadatta Maharaj. My teacher, Robert Adams, stayed with both these teachers for a period of time, as well as with Yogananda.

Both Ramana and Maharaj offered the same way to find ultimate peace and happiness and that was self-inquiry or self abidance. If you read carefully, both describe exactly the same process in slightly different ways. They say find the sense of I Am, or just I, and hold onto it. Play with it. See all its manifestations and forms, and then rest in it, or abide in it. When this can be done effortlessly, the most fantastic things happen, such as the

experience of a degree of peacefulness and happiness never known before, as well as an increasing discovery that the world we live in is not so important as we had thought. In fact, the world we live in is a creation of our minds and conditionings, and what we call consciousness is nothing more than a reality distorted by a network of thought. We discover that the waking world is mostly a figment of mind. But we also discover that by holding onto the sense of existence, the “I Am and I exist sensation,” we can go entirely beyond existence and mortality, a place of perfect undisturbed peace with a full recognition of our true nature beyond mortal existence.

The dialogues in this book are important because they show the birth of a Jnani, or one self-realized through self abidance, as opposed to the birth of a Yogi, who is one who applies meditation practices to that other than I.

Rajiv Kapur is a householder in Mumbai, where Maharaj and Ranji also lived. He is married and has a young daughter and son, and runs a glass business with his father. His life is busy with family affairs and working in an office.

He had been practicing Kriya yoga for 12 years after being initiated into Kriya Yoga, the same type of yoga taught by Yogananda, who was Robert’s second teacher. One day, his Kriya practices were seen through by him. Rajiv saw conclusively that these practices were external to the I, and wanted to know who or what that I was. As he turned his gaze inward onto his own internal working, he began to spontaneously experience samadhis and increasing blissfulness. At that point he was directed towards the website <http://itisnotreal.com>, where I set

forth the teachings of Robert Adams and the story of my life with him.

Immediately I recognized in Rajiv someone who had the qualities that it took to go all the way. He had an ability to internalize and articulate that experience, and he was able to isolate the core experience that does not change even while all of consciousness fluctuates. Also, he had a great head of steam, a spiritual momentum of spiritual power built over 12 years of meditation practice. And, he was modest and not headstrong and opinionated. He took to instruction. Lastly, he was sensitive and kind. These are the qualities that Consciousness itself loves.

He took to self-inquiry, as they say, as a duck to water and the rest is history. These are the dialogues between him and me over a three month period of time.

These dialogues are important for those who want to practice self-inquiry as they point to pitfalls and also they provide a map of important “landmarks” and experiences along the way.

There is very little in the spiritual literature about what the subjective experiences are or can be when one uses the self as the object of meditation. Mostly we find lectures about that nature of what is, of ontology and epistemology, and lectures about how to practice, but very little about the path as personally walked and experienced. That is why Yogananda’s book was such a powerful catalyst for many: he made spirituality real.

The few who do talk about their awakening experiences really didn’t say much. Ramana’s self-described awakening experience

takes only a half dozen paragraphs to describe, and anyone using this as his or her model have little to point to as guideposts. Robert's awakening is also described in a few paragraphs and you never get a feel for his subjectivity before that or during his time with Ramana. These dialogues clearly explain Rajiv's every move from beginning samadhis to a clear description of Turiya—waking sleep.

Nisargadatta talks a little about his experience in his book *Self-Knowledge and Self-Realization*, found on the <http://itisnotreal.com> website, but again, it is abstract and impersonal.

There are many books that offer good pointers on how to practice, such as the *Path of Sri Ramana Part I*, by Sadhu Om and Michael James, and also James' *Happiness and the Art of Being*, and the excellent meditation manual written by Pradeep Apte called the *Nisargadatta Gita*, but there is almost nothing about the experiences along the way.

So, as these dialogues unfolded, it became clear that they were revealing in well-described detail the processes and universal subjective experiences that yogis might experience if they were to take the 'I am' as their "object" of meditation rather than the void, a mantra, mandala, or some other mental or physical object. It would offer them a jet ride to liberation and happiness beyond comprehension.

So too, it might convince many neo Advaitins with their spiritual curiosity piqued by neo Advaita teachers, that awakening required a depth of self-inquiry they were not used to, and at the same time, provide a road with landmarks. If neo Advaita is

to flourish and continue, it needs to go deeper. It is utterly superficial now.

This is especially important, since even small changes in the way one practices self-inquiry can make a huge difference. This is noted by Michael Langford in his book, *The Most Rapid and Direct Means to Eternal Bliss*. Michael was never able to isolate the sense of I Am, and had practiced self-inquiry with little progress for 17 years. Then he discovered for himself, a little “twist” of the method that does not require isolating that feeling, which he called awareness watching awareness, which is similar to a technique Zen Buddhists call Shikantaza. I do not recommend this AWA unless you cannot isolate that sense of presence, or I Amness, because that I Am sense, if acquired, provides a wide road to follow inward.

These dialogues clearly point out some of the landmarks and pitfalls of meditating on and abiding in that sense of I Am, as well as the experiences that unfold and the understanding that comes. It also demonstrates that larger or smaller adjustments in technique and explanations of what was unfolding allowed Rajiv to understand himself in a way that escaped him even after 12 years of dedicated meditation.

An appendix has now been added to this edition, called “Hunting the I,” which is an introduction to successful self-inquiry and self-abidance, especially written for those who have not yet developed introspective discrimination. For many people, introspection is learned, it is not an innate skill. They don’t know how to find the I Am sense, the subject, the looker, and tend to identify with thoughts, energies or the body sense.

Many books are mentioned throughout this book. Most are on the Internet. Either do a google search to them to find a current URL, and then download, or find a link in the resources section of <http://itisnotreal.com>

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THE DIALOGUES

RAJIV:

Edji, I visited your blog and felt I should write to you about a few things. I write to one who, not only is a disciple of the great Robert Adams but also to the one whom is aware of "what is," probably the truth as it is. I know it is impossible to correctly describe that state in words and there is no way you, I or anyone can, yet I feel inclined to communicate, share and learn from you what you feel as regards the marvelous thing we call "consciousness" or "truth" or whatever names we can call it by.

The past:

My "journey" began 12 yrs ago when I was first initiated in Kriya. After much seeking and looking and initiated a few more times with other Gurus, I finally found the Guru my heart approved. He was a traditional Guru and very jovial person at the same time. He got me initiated in higher kriyas including kechari mudra.

Kechari mudra is of immense importance to experience higher levels of consciousness. During my practices in Kriya I had various "experiences" like OBE (Out of Body), Lucid dreams, heightened awareness, even kevali kumbhak (stoppage of breath at the heart centre automatically which gave immense joy all over each cell of my body.

On 26 August 2003 I had a kevali experience which sent a wave of energy coursing from the base of the spine to the top of the head which came downwards and stopped at the heart centre. I felt no breathing, time stopped and I was engulfed in torrential bliss. I remained in this state for few days and experienced tremendous Oneness with everything around me.

The Stage In-between:

The above 'achievement' itself became the biggest obstacle because I was seeking to repeat it again and again. But I met with continuous failure. On realizing that probably the biggest barrier is my own beliefs and conditioning, I just couldn't keep doing my kriyas. The techniques, the teachings, were becoming a barrier to experience truth as it is, for the mind was trying to reach "somewhere" rather than just "being."

I then decided that I shall simply observe what is going on within and outside of me. I realized that the bliss, joy and thoughtless state returned even without Kriya. The mere "observation" resulted in this. All concepts like God, blessings, liberation, beliefs dropped on careful observation.

The "Present"

I carry on trying to witness every thought, emotion that arises in my mind. I realize that my awareness is growing as I start giving utmost attention to everything happening around me. There are glimpses of joy and utmost bliss, which prevails around me. My state is like a man drunk but with extreme and heightened attention. I feel intoxicated with immense awareness. There is nothing I like to achieve, gain or be. I am just "it." This is

perhaps just "being." I observe everything clearly. The colors around me are much brighter than usual and sparkle and dance around me. During that "glimpse" (as I call it) the thoughts seem rare. Even if they arise I watch them clearly as they come and go. There is no desire to achieve, be or go anywhere. Everything around looks so magical and pure like I am observing something new for the very first time. There is no need of Guru or any God during that state. Everything melts.

The question:

Edji, I call the above a glimpse because it is not in continuity. It lasts for perhaps 2 to 3 hours a day mostly during the evening. I can't say I can create the glimpse, for it happens on its own and disappears on its own. Perhaps in the evening I don't have to worry much about my work or maybe there is some other reason. The "glimpse" has happened to me even during the office hours but it is rare. Sometimes I feel the desire to be in that glimpse forever, which could be an obstacle. Please write back your observations and suggestions. I really need some guidance on this. I have written down as well as I can in words.

EDJI:

What you are experiencing is due to the intensity of your practice.

If you could dwell in this state all the time, that is one form of Samadhi. If you can formalize your meditation and sit in Padmaasana for about 45 minutes in the morning, you should be able to generate it at will.

Most probably this will disappear over time. It is the final state for some types of yogis, such as Krishnamurti, etc. Why don't you go with it and see where it takes you?

This is not classic Advaita though. In Advaita you focus attention not on everything, but attempt to concentrate on the subject, the sense of I.

Don't do that as yet though. Continue to go as you are doing but add at least one 45 minute session sitting facing a wall with eyes closed or half open. Sit as solidly as possible.

RAJIV (A day or two later):

Sir, after the initial period of objectless concentration, awareness is automatically turned within. After a few Kriya Pranyamas, the body isn't felt at all. The body consciousness feels like a corpse, as though the body is there but the awareness is within. I become aware of the movement of thoughts, how they appear and how they drop.

Many times during witness, the thoughts are not there and I reach a stage of sort of void or emptiness. At that time I observe an expansion happening at the third eye. Nothingness prevails, so then there is no object as such except that nothingness. Also I feel during witness stage there is another witness watching the witnessing, as thoughts appear and identification starts, that another witness is always watching whether witnessing is happening or not and brings back to witnessing again. It is sort of complicated to express but it is something like that. Is this the "subject" you are referring too?

Actually the period of nothingness or void is too short, the mind interferes and by witnessing it I reach a thoughtless state for sometime till mind interferes again. All this while after the body consciousness is long lost, there is one more "witness" who is observing whether the witnessing is happening or not. It is something like that.

EDJI:

Yes, this is perfect understanding. Eventually there will only be one witness. One of the witnesses you experience is merely the mind commenting on the introspection process.

You might, at this time, instead of trying to follow "I AM" introspection, just try to witness the witness. Watch the watcher.

RAJIV:

I wanted to tell you also that yesterday I was in the "glimpse" for an entire day after my dhyaan. I have described this state in my earlier mail. You say there is much to go further. But within and outside of me I feel "this is it." A growing connection with everything, animate or inanimate around me. You said it is a form of Samadhi. Previous to you, my Kriya Guru had termed it as Sarvikalpa Samadhi. But these again are concepts, but just curious what kind of Samadhi you would define this as sheer curiosity.

EDJI:

What you call the glimpse is the absence of the thinking process. You are intently and completely aware without the chattering mind being engaged. But in the glimpse you are not aware that all that out there in the world is only your mind creation and is not real.

I have no names for the various Samadhis. As you say, they are just names and of no import. Even the experience of the various Samadhis is not important.

In fact, nothing is important except to live as a kind and just man helping others, being a shepherd for all physically and morally. You are your brother's keeper. All the rest is only philosophy and illusion.

You are very close to finishing your self-exploration. Therefore I urge you to ripen your understanding and peace, and care for others.

RAJIV:

Sir I visited your blog and read your detail journey with respect to the understanding of truth, what we exactly are. You nearly bought tears in my eyes when I first read them. Later I have been reading it again and again, slowly trying to grasp it in context of the limited understanding I have had so far and haven't yet fully read the whole post carefully enough. I do understand that I cannot grasp the entirety or the actuality since words no matter how beautifully you may have tried to put down yet may not reflect the "experience," meaning they can't

possibly convey the actual "experience," they can only convey an image of the actuality which again can have a limiting impact in the minds unless the person is advanced enough to recognize the workings of the mind.

I am sure however most of them who are involved with you know you are only trying to inspire, and each of us need to reach the Truth of the "unreality" or illusion on their own. I do have a few questions sir, only you are capable enough to guide me sir. As a person surrendering completely to you and your wisdom, I in all humbleness wish to ask you the following questions in relation to the Truth which you described in your blog:

EDJI I don't follow how you term the objects outside and inside as "unreal." Sir I am desperate to know this. I find the objects beautiful, blissful and so connected with them, I mean all people around, the cars, the animals, the mountains and the valleys. I feel utmost oneness, connected so I really feel it's real. Thoughts and emotions which arise and disappear on careful observation is not the real Me that is true, I catch them now just as they seem to arise.

Sir my question is:

a) Are the objects, both outer and I-thought "unreal" because they don't disturb me anymore? I have realized they will appear and disappear but they have nothing to do with me. But I can still see them, feel them so in that sense they are still real aren't they?

b) Also I find the awareness growing now, as the I-thought becomes lesser and lesser, awareness or wholeness increase. In

that sense I have realized that the bigger truth is what I carry at the background, the blissful awareness which pervades everything. That awareness actually covers up the entire object, outside and inside of me. So is it in that sense you say that the objects are unreal and an illusion?

Is the blissful awareness I mention the same as the emptiness you mention? It pervades entirely, outer and inner, but it's so amazingly beautiful so in that sense it's still real isn't? I mean I realize the awareness, the emptiness and the joy within and outside of me because of which nothing else actually matters, my thoughts or the outer objects, money or power nothing at all, but yet they still exist don't they? I may not be bothered of them, they have stopped affecting me; I look at them and smile many times when they seek identification but they do exist still.

EDJI:

Excellent!

It is excellent that you are in love with Consciousness. This means you should make rapid progress to eventually go beyond consciousness.

The Oneness is not real. You are merely observing the totality of Consciousness. But who observes? THAT is beyond Consciousness, prior to consciousness.

I have high hopes for your eventual understanding. Did I send you the Nisargadatta Gita? It is a better book for you to read right now. The book I earlier recommended, Prior to

Consciousness, covers many points, while the Gita is specific to where you are.

It was written by a man who extracted all quotes made by Nisargadatta in ten books, that dealt with the sense of I Am, beingness, or presence. Reading it automatically brings one's awareness to the I-sense. Nisaragadatta also points out how both the I-thought and I Am sense are unreal in the sense they are temporary and are ultimately mental constructs as opposed having reality on their own.

RAJIV:

“The consciousness or emptiness is also not me” WOW. Now this is some realization. Do you mean the I or the subject is still only an object? The one who is witnessing the I-thought too is an object? Wow...so in that sense the awareness is still not me. Do I witness and observe “the blissful awareness.” Am I too find out who is witnessing this?? By simply observing again?

EDJI:

Just be aware that anything experienced is temporary, phenomenal, unreal. Consciousness is temporary, unreal. Only that which is beyond consciousness is not touched by change and mortality, and that can never be known by the mind or consciousness; you can only be that.

Your beautiful world will disappear when your body dies, but you, as the observer, the unborn, will never be touched.

You are blessed now by Consciousness. She is revealing all. The Gita should take you all the way. Enjoy the love of Consciousness while it lasts.

RAJIV :

Sir You say "Enjoy the love of Consciousness while it lasts" Hmmm... Even this is not real? So far it looks like "this is it" after all what more can a man ask for in life, other than this blissful moment, this joy. I am drunk most of the time now. In this state. Now the "glimpse" has become "me" and the thoughts identification is for 2 to 3 hours in waking state at the most and even then it is observed.

I remember when I first interacted with you it was the other way round, how true were you Lord. You led me here Lord. The awareness and consciousness covers everything that exists, up, down, inside and outside of me now. I bow in humbleness to you sir. You say "This is not real too" and so I remind myself to watch out for this, not to attempt holding on or attaching Me to it. It is not "Me" (intellectually so far), so I warn myself, never mind if it goes, did I even deserve this in the first place? It may come, it may go; never mind, I will keep observing. A saint told me, "Enjoy the love of consciousness as long as it lasts." So be it.

Let the Gita lead where it has to lead me.

EDJI:

PRECISELY CORRECT

RAJIV:

Sir after the initial I-thought or rather witnessing of thought is over, a stream of consciousness is maintained for some time till a few thoughts disturb it too. This is the dark void or emptiness we call consciousness which I had earlier termed "me," I see I was identifying with this earlier taking that to be the subject and thoughts to be the object. But clearly now I can see that the "consciousness" itself is the object.

EDJI:

This is a very important insight is it not? Consciousness is not you. The Void is not you, nor is the Void, Consciousness. The Void is Consciousness after high refinement through self-inquiry and meditation on the I or I Am. The true Void is self-illuminated emptiness which contains everything, and is really the essence of Consciousness, which is everything. But you are even more pure than the Void. You are beyond the reach of the Void. Is it merely another class of objects to you.

RAJIV:

As I was witnessing "consciousness" itself many times, a few totally irrelevant thoughts would appear and try disturb the state. Especially when I see only the "consciousness" it goes "Ah I see it," a thought. So now I witness the "consciousness" and also the apparent thought. It is just meaningless thought which appears and disappears; the "one" witnesses both the consciousness and the thought. My question sir is:

1) What do I do with the thoughts, which spring up on their own? I can witness the start of them and then they do disappear but they appear again disturbing the witnessing of the object "consciousness." Many times I can maintain witnessing both the "consciousness" and thought at the same time. Will these meaningless thoughts completely disappear or no?

EDJI :

Don't worry about the thoughts. They no longer have much power over you. Just focus on the sense of "I AM," if you can locate that, otherwise focus on the container of consciousness, the void, interpenetrating all phenomena.

RAJIV:

By being extremely attentive to the field of consciousness, the thoughts do fade away but they sometimes appear again, especially when I "have it." Will these meaningless thoughts completely disappear ever?

EDJI :

The thoughts no longer have power. Ignore them. They are irrelevant, unimportant. They will always be there randomly as long as you have a brain and body. The brain is sort of like a radio receiver, picking thoughts out of the void. They have nothing to do with you.

RAJIV:

WOW! The thing about witnessing is that it pervades normal waking stage too, meaning during office work and my walks especially when I am not engrossed with work, I see the witness of the stream of consciousness and the thoughts which appear and disappear. The witness or subject can witness both at the same time, though the thought is powerless, is no more loud, it is mild, barely recognizable most of the time, but it still exists nonetheless.

2) I try locating where this subject is, who is witnessing both but I can't find it anywhere, meaning the witness (at the background) can't be traced. The moment I can locate the witness, it will cease to be the subject, it will become another object. Sometimes I feel he is at the 3rd eye witnessing the awareness or consciousness and sometimes I feel he is at the heart. You said "watch the watcher," but I can't find him anywhere.

EDJI:

Of course you can not watch the watcher, so what conclusion can you draw?

The observer does not exist in this world or any other! You are beyond existence entirely. You are not part of the manifest world You are not found within consciousness. As an entity in consciousness, you do not exist. This world has nothing to do with you.

RAJIV:

I read a few stanzas 7 to 8 of the Gita, I get it but I will move very, very slowly with it, perhaps 1 to 2 stanzas a day.

EDJI:

This is perfect. You are now answering the greatest questions posed by all beings through time. Consciousness---God---is revealing everything to you. There is no need to rush. When I first read Nisargadatta's "Prior to Consciousness," I could read at most a page a day, sometimes only a paragraph. Each sentence was like a hammer blow to my mind. Even the second time.

Where you are, not one in a thousand has touched. Don't worry about speed. You are doing well.

RAJIV:

Last night I had a unique experience and want to know if my understanding on this is correct or no sir. Actually yesterday's meditation (which I have send in another mail to you sir) gave me a glimpse that I was oscillating or moving from waking to dream states and vice versa. So I thought I will try and meditate while in sleep during night time and try and be aware what of actually takes place. So I kept my deepest attention at the void and kept thoughts out and relaxed. I affirmed that I keep my attention as far as possible on the void till I fall asleep.

The next moment I realized that I was dreaming because I was with a few people chatting. But I knew very well I was actually

dreaming this because I could literally will myself back to waking stage, I then would go back to dreaming state again, this time something about my son being in the room but yelling...I KNEW this was a dream too and I could actually choose what kind of dream I wanted.

Now in the very dream I was excited of this and thought I will write to you this tomorrow itself but then I thought why not visit you too by thought in the dream state as I could do whatever I wanted in the dream state. But then something held me back. I decided I not venture too far.

Maybe some fear or something. How I can be so sure that it was not a dream that I was dreaming that I was aware of the state is because I could move from dream to wake on will. Also that very night I had to run around with my son so he had got me pretty exhausted physically, he is just 8 and I am 38 but these kids are blessed with more energy so I had exert and had a slight muscle contraction.

Now in dream state I was aware of that contraction too; strange but true. I was connected with my physical body in some way. I felt it in my dream state and then I consciously became aware of my waking state and saw yes it was slightly paining. Then I was convinced I could move in these two states. I tried the third time again just to make sure, this time I saw a geometric image at my third eye, it was blazing with bright and greenish glow and I got scared and started reciting "OM," "OM," and then I tried hard to open my eyes and go to waking state but this time I just COULDN'T. I was paralyzed and then I remembered you saying all this is unreal. I am only a witness. I just looked at it. It disappeared on its own and I was awake in some time.

I reflected on all that what happened. I had all kinds of thoughts pouring and had difficulty to sleep back, but then I managed to remember that all this is an illusion, play of consciousness; it has nothing to do with me, and magically the thoughts subsided and I slept to wake up like a normal routine. I remembered everything in the morning.

Sir do you think it is possible to move between these stages during sleep? Has this to do anything with Advaitic understanding?

EDJI:

My experience is that all states of consciousness are illusionary, and merely happen to me, like clouds passing overhead. They have no substance. These states and experiences don't touch YOU.

Yet, it is important to play with consciousness for a time to understand it has no real substance or existence to you. Just don't take it too seriously. It is play. AND, it is easy to make false discoveries that are refuted a few days later by another false discovery. The play is infinite and variable. There is no truth in it anywhere.

It MAY be important for you to do Samadhi on the Void to become one with it for a time. This is the traditional way. It is a continuation of your love of and for consciousness which has brought you as far as you have come.

Remember, you do not exist as an entity, process or thing, and the world-consciousness is doing its own thing. Don't worry anymore at all about thoughts. Just be aware of the Void and the coming and going of waking, dream and sleep. Even better is to atch onto the I-sense.

Every teacher has a slightly different "message," based on his or her education, background and body-mind. Two students can study under the same teacher and have two different messages, such as the difference between Ramana Maharshi and Nisargadatta's messages. So take what I say as pointers, not truth.

There will come a time soon where you begin to write your own book and pass on your own pointers.

Personally, now I find little that interests me in the world or Consciousness anymore.

I am left only caring about people like you who are close to liberation, people who are in need of help, and animals, who are helpless to help themselves. I still participate in this illusory reality because I care for all the apparent beings and act as if they were real. What comes out of my mind or my voidness is of no interest to me. It is all illusion—temporary, changeable, without substance.

But, a kitten, who is living in a ditch, cold, wet and hungry, to me, that kitten and her need is my only reality. In the end, the book you write may be very different. I hope though that your book will be filled with kindness and a sense of justice and caring.

You and I appear to be connected on a very deep level as our experiences and messages seem so similar. You appear to have all the equipment to be a great teacher some day. Do not rush. Go slowly, gently. Be gentle with yourself and others.

RAJIV:

Sir as you rightly said I kind of played around just to check out a bit. My consciousness took me there in dream state too. But yes it is just a play, nothing at all to be taken seriously. I know thoughts are an illusion, nothing real. The dream state even though more beautiful and vibrant /colorful than wakeful state, I knew in the dream it was unreal and I am slowly getting hints that consciousness itself too is unreal.

I can notice the change in the "love" of consciousness itself now. The stream of consciousness is there; it covers and pervades all but it is changing its form. It is not always "oneness" now, in fact sometimes it is depressing too. It gets beautiful sometimes, but sometimes it is not so at all. It is just a passing emotion of sadness or grief (now there is no reason for it at all), it just is. I simply observe it, that's my "being," my I AMNESS. So it is nothing to do, just pure observation. So I learned that this joy and happiness, the oneness, is temporary in the realm of consciousness which I had thought was the final state. The "ME" itself is temporary, and I am observing it too, I can feel the sadness, grief, depression in my heart arising even in the state of so called "consciousness" and I remembered your words, "This is not Real," it is not YOU. Well it can't be me if I can observe it right?

During that period it is not that I am in a thoughtless zone but it is not important, the thoughts, they are there, doing the job that they have too. My attention is more on the "beingness," even if it is sadness, depression or joy, whatever. This very moment is "beingness," or I-AMNESS. I touch that, but it is not permanent because its nature is duality. Now I know. You had warned me earlier on this and I thought Ah, I am in bliss, I need nothing. I am This. I am bliss. I am oneness.

But now look at me; trying to create means identifying with it, I mean it will involve effort and ego, a struggle for more and more. Why not just be in that "beingness" itself? Let the consciousness give whatever it wants to give me sir. I remind myself again and again. Be the witness. Isn't this right sir?

Sir you say out of love for me and those who really need you. You have a huge heart and are very kind. The only book I would like to read would be on me, which would have all empty pages. Nothing in them. I want to be capable to read that nothingness in me if possible. The thing to teach would be only to my own self, to serve in any capacity, and to remain worthy.

EDJI:

The I Am sense, beingness, has nothing to do with thoughts or emotions. The sense of having a body, the passing thoughts, emotions are like clouds passing over the I Am sense. You must get deeper than thoughts and emotions and attend to that which feels most like you. Later, you will see that this sense itself is like a passing cloud over the deepest part of you.

(NOTE: It should be noted that up to this point Rajiv's messages were poorly written, haphazard, ungrammatical with lots of spelling errors. I sent him a message that if he wanted to be a teacher, he needed to slow down his rush of words and be more precise and careful in his exposition. It was mentioned that such precision also helps introspection and meditation to become more precise. Now when he writes, his English is just about perfect. Consciousness speaks clearly through him. That email is missing, but the email below mentions it again.)

EDJI:

You have come far Rajiv, and very rapidly, which means you have to spend some time consolidating all the states and understanding to make it permanent in yourself.

The bliss generally passes after a time as it is a function of Samadhi and various types of unitary consciousness. In fact, I found the bliss to be quite distracting and unnecessary.

Most make a big deal of Samadhis, unity with parts of or the totality of Consciousness, which really means the Void. But the source—YOU—are beyond the Void, and Samadhis do not apply to the source. It is a traditionally accepted precondition that isn't really necessary.

In the end, after many of your remaining hindrances drop off, you will just rest, doing nothing special, in yourself, no longer making effort to explore or grow spiritually. Your journey and struggle will be over.

At this point, you will either become like something dead with no response to the world, which is the fate of some, or there will awaken in you the strongest conceivable sense that you are responsible for the world, for it does emanate from your mind. In a sense, though illusory, it belongs to you. You become Buddha, Christ, saving, helping.

You will make a decision to help all sentient beings in any way you can, from offering the shoes off your feet to some homeless person, to risking your life to save an animal. This to me is the real liberation—an immersion into a universal Mother Love.

I think I know which way you will go, and I hope you make that choice, though it will not seem to be up to you. It will happen to you.

If you are going to be a teacher, you need to express yourself clearly for others to easily understand. It is also necessary to cultivate this attentiveness because it is easier in this way to become aware of hidden concepts remaining in your understanding. You need to become precise in expression and deconstructing what others say to you.

RAJIV:

While in dhyaan, witnessing the void ahead of me I sometimes see a dot of light, which on concentrating disappears. Then some revolving circle of light which expands sometimes or few flashes of bright expanding light. None of these are in any particular order.

They appear and disappear. Maybe it is the play of consciousness again but Kriya Yogis give a lot of importance to penetrate the small dot of light. They wouldn't value what you actually go through during the day, bliss and love of consciousness, oneness, or witnessing process in fact most I knew don't even know what I was going through. Few would say increase pranayama and few would decrease it and none knew exactly what was happening to me.

Only you explained and finally I understood that the play of consciousness was happening to me. I did learn from Kriya though, I was practicing it for 2 to 3 hours daily at a stretch doing heavy kumbhaks sometimes which I feel resulted in few health problems too. The "results" I am getting by following Advaitic are the same as Kriya, in fact much better without the dangers of too much breath control, and many unanswered questions were resolved too which they have no idea about.

My Guru M.P. Dubeyji who initiated me in my lineage 5 yrs ago left us very early, we could interact very little and then no one really knew anything apart from the "star." But sir what is this "penetration" of Thirrd eye? Is it vital for self-realization sir?

EDJI :

I will explain this precisely because it is an important question and the answer is relevant to many people who ask me questions.

In Zen, masters talk about the need to balance Joriki with Prajna. Joriki is the power of meditation, Dhyana, Samadhi,

while Prajna is the penetrating wisdom concerning the nature of self and reality—Consciousness.

The concept is that concentration, or Samadhi power must move in step with wisdom, otherwise the attainment is incomplete.

You have generated tremendous dhyana power after years of meditation practice, so the wisdom of understanding the true nature of consciousness comes easily to you now. Now there is a better balance as your understanding has caught up to your huge bank account of spiritual energy.

Most people who come into Advaita teachings don't practice meditation, and the true meaning of Advaita escapes them because their power of attention has not energized their awareness.

I don't think most of the current teachers recommend intense practice, therefore those who follow them may have good understanding, but no real attainment, and as such, their understanding is shallow and faulty. They don't have the transformative energy of Samadhi power. Fortunately, I studied with many Zen masters who emphasized meditation. Robert, on the other hand, emphasized not formal meditation, but self-inquiry, and spending time with him. But you can practice meditation on the self or on the guru.

However, one can play around with meditation and concentration forever, trapped in various spectacular displays in one's imaginal spaces. Many Buddhist traditions spend entirely too much time exploring various sorts of Voids.

The same is true of the Third Eye. My “eye” was opened within months of starting practice because it seemed natural for me to do so. It seemed as if that task was set before me as a natural unfolding. The Third Eye just gradually opened of itself during intense meditation and gradually expanded to reveal the Void nature of consciousness. But you already know that, so there is no need to penetrate anything. But you may want to do so simply to see for yourself to complete your schooling.

There are deeper mysteries you need to unfold yet, and I will help you through them when the time is come. But the Third Eye is a beginner’s discovery. You are way beyond that.

[Many yogis begin meditating to open the Third Eye, which is turning the attention inwards, imaginatively, to the space between and above the eyes. Generally after a little practice, the darkness gives way to a sense of light, generally purple or green. The lighted area gradually expands, and the meditator imaginatively “pushes” the boundary of lighted inner awareness upwards, outwards and downwards, but not all at the same time. Gradually the light encompasses and interpenetrates all inner experience, and the light is generally recognized as being similar, if not the same, as light we see from without the body.

That is, the inner subjective lighted voidness is seen as the same as the external lighted spaciousness that is the world of objects. The only advantage to the Advaita student, is that the inner world is enlarged and lit in such a way as to give space for the internal phenomenal world to be contained in, just as the apparent external space allows a platform or screen for the apparent external world to exist.]

RAJIV :

"However, one can play around with meditation and concentration forever, trapped in various spectacular displays in their imaginal spaces. Many Buddhist traditions spend entirely too much time exploring various sorts of Voids."

Sir, This is the real state of most disciples who engage in meditational practices, at least in Kriya. Been in it for nearly 9 yrs to understand how beautiful and realistic your thoughts are. Sir I met two kinds of Yogis:

- 1) Who were curiosity seekers, mainly those who read Autobiography of a Yogi by Yogananda and felt that they need to explore their spiritual self and be like him. All that bliss and devotion coupled with the seemingly airplane shortcut method of Kriya to "Reach" God, the "end" of all their "problems" and
- 2) Those who really practiced Kriya mostly the traditional ones, those of who devoted long periods of time in meditation doing between 144 to 300 kriyas a day. This would take around 2 to 3 hours roughly daily.

The first ones don't get much result except few moments of joy and make no real progress. Their focus was the "unconditional" devotion to the Guru which they accepted as part of their Sadhana; this was not just with one Guru but with most Kriya organizations. They remained "Kriya Yogis."

And the second ones were those who with their intense practice had developed good amount of mental focus and concentration. However such ones DON'T have a clue what they do with such power. They would get all kinds of experiences no doubt but these were invariably coupled with a desire to "REACH OUT" for more and more and more. In short they were always chasing and would get easily frustrated and angry. The energy they accumulated, in my opinion, was wasted on various emotions. They could stop thoughts through sheer will but never allowed the "Beingness" or I-AMNESS OR CONSCIOUSNESS to make its presence felt except for one or 2 that I got to know of, one of whom was my late Kriya Guru.

Most always wanting to reach somewhere, wanting experiences and all kinds of fancy head trips which only took them away from what "actuality" is or what consciousness is all about. In my opinion they had the power of awareness but they were lost how to use them to explore within. They too remained Kriya Yogis but in a messy condition because of all the conditionings, beliefs, habits, memories associated with the word "Kriya."

A standard reply given to most of them facing problem would be either "Increase your Kriya numbers" or "increase your devotion to the physical Guru, he will see you through" I always failed to understand how they could actually help one to deal with ones emotions. Emotions play a big part in daily Sadhana. Most were either unconsciously identifying with them or running away from them.

Only self enquiry can help one to deal with the actuality of the situation I feel sir. To reach to "Beingness" one must at least allow it to flower on its own, without use of much effort,

without an element of "doership" sir. The "beingness" is there, it is available instantly we just need to observe in the moment itself.

I unconsciously stumbled on this, I never read any Advaitic stuff but on my own. I was guided to understand Mother and She has blessed me with Her love and also her fluctuating form. Now when I read a few things I say, "AH! This is what it was." YOU were the missing link for me to come in terms of my understanding, the present situation that I am in. I was so lost without You sir and lucky to have your Guidance for further learning. So lucky.

That makes me come to the point sir, the point that you have so beautifully and aptly raised. Sir, are you trying considering combining the two because one without the other is not "observing" the totality of it. Not seeing the actuality. Most Advaites can't feel the "beingness" because they have no meditational energy, no focus, and most yogis can't feel the "beingness" because they don't want to. AH! is it so sir?

And sir without establishing in the "beingness" or I-AMNESS first, the silent watcher cannot be found out? Only then can you find out that I am beyond the I-Amness. Is it not so sir?

EDJI:

See Rajiv, you are becoming a teacher. Your insight is 100% correct. That is why these dialogues are important. You understand Consciousness and it is unfolding from the perspective of a practicing yogi. Most dialogues with teachers found in books and on the Internet do not deal with these

subjects. In fact, they are quite simplistic or are meant as beginners' books for a very big audience.

You are rapidly becoming a master of the subtle body—the imaginal play of Consciousness. At some point in this play you will go beyond Consciousness and will permanently identify with THAT which you really are. But there is no rush. Enjoy the play and the unfolding.

Actually though, you can have realization without the awareness of the I Am presence, it is just that it is harder this way.

RAJIV:

Sir I was just glancing your website today. I am a very poor reader but your website <http://itisnotreal.com> looks wonderful.

I was glancing at a few things and came upon your experience of heart which was very similar to the one I experienced. I have written in the booklet about it. On 26th August 2003, I had this unique experience of breath stopping on its own at the heart chakra. A wave of blissful energy rushed from the base of my spine to the top of my head and I was immersed in bright lights all over. This got me fearful, though for first time as it happened but for a few days I was in unexplained joy.

Mother consciousness' blessings have remained ever since. I did read something very similar occurred with you too. Experiences could be fleeting, changeable as they take place in the consciousness but it does show we seem to be connected. We hardly know each other since a month, but I feel like I was been taken care of as your disciple since a long time. I can't believe it

is just a month that I know you. Impossible.

RAJIV:

Sir I can't relate to your state as yet, as I am no way near it yet, but Master you are much needed. More than you can possibly think. See Sir you have made me realize all this play of consciousness. Don't I know that you are working on this. Without you I would have been playing mind games with all the Samadhi power. What use?

When consciousness would smile, I would be happy and when not, most Yogis get depressed. Worse, they would want to create it by "doing" more Kriyas. I wouldn't have known this without You Sir. Consciousness itself wants us to let go of Her but we don't. This is because most Yogis feel they are the consciousness, SAT, CHIT, ANANDA. I am beginning to realize we aren't even SAT, CHIT, ANANDA. She gives us Love not to seek it more but to accept her "beingness" as She is, with love or without Love and perhaps move to the watcher of all the drama.

The other day I was only silent, absolutely peaceful, nothing was moving, all was quiet. There was neither joy, nor sadness, nor happiness, no beauty at the outside or inside, absolutely nothing. All I wanted was to be silent those few hours. There was no Bhava at all. It was a different state. So I now know Mother Consciousness changes her colors not to tease or frustrate us, but for us to look beyond Her Duality. She is ever so kind, but Yogis identify with Her and that is why all the emotional fireworks happen within them and spurts of energies they can't seem to handle.

EDJI:

Good Rajiv,

The states of bliss and happiness you are experiencing are wanted by one and all. Some gurus never have gone past this state of unity with consciousness. They become trapped in it and trap their followers. In a worse bag are those who say no effort is required, as somehow that message alone is supposed to lead to liberation.

You need to become nothing and go beyond consciousness. To do so you need to become totally stupid, knowing nothing. This is part of the passage.

RAJIV:

Sir You write "You need to become nothing and go beyond consciousness. To do so, you need to become totally stupid, knowing nothing. This is part of the passage."

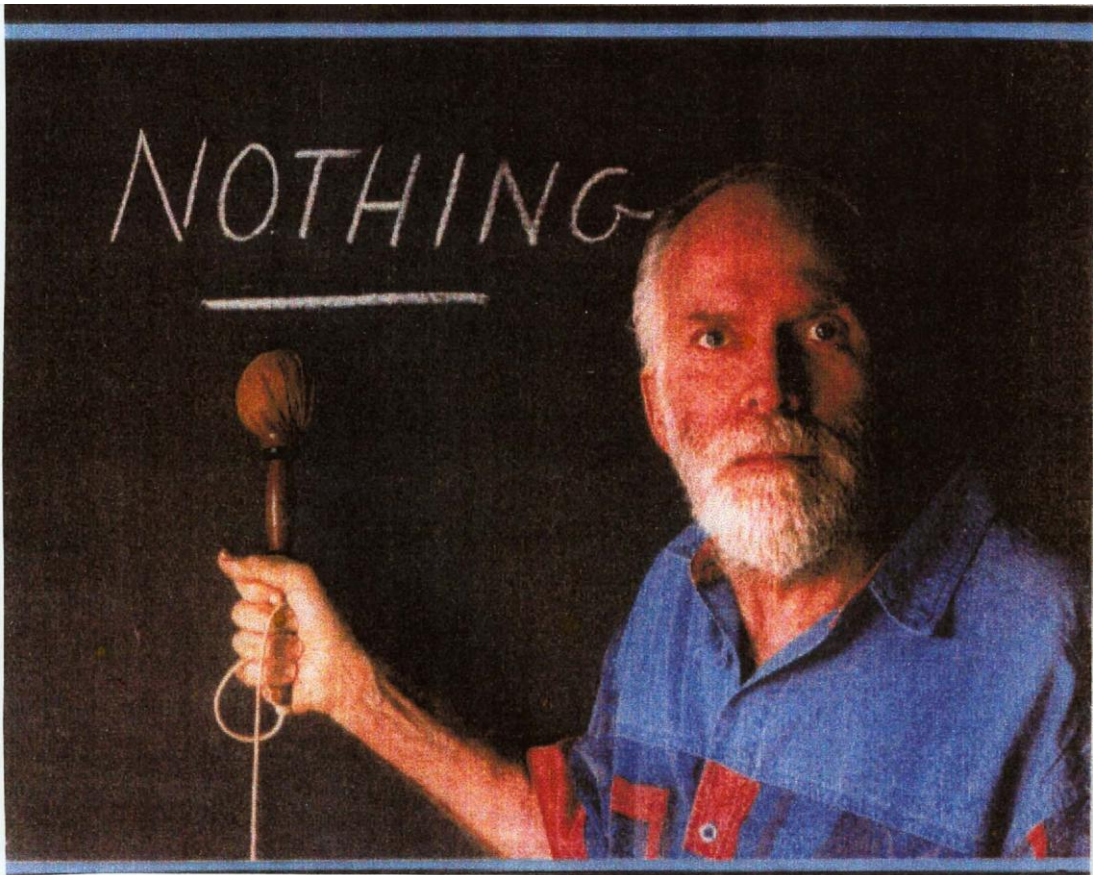
Intellectually it probably means emptying of everything one has ever known, dropping of all that which has been experienced, all concepts and systems. To actually reach there is all together a different ball game. I believe it will too happen on its own after I have held on to the I-Amness for a fairly long time. What a state that would be. I wonder Sir. Need your Blessing.

EDJI:

You always have my blessings Rajiv. You will see what it is like. It is more than letting go of concepts; it is like death. Most don't like it at first because it feels like death, the disappearance of I-

Amness and knowingness. Later it will seem like a great joy because there is nothing more to learn or do. You have become nothing, not the Void, but non-existent. The Void still exists as Consciousness.

What I am and you are is totally beyond states; states are manifestations of Consciousness. Sleep, dream, waking---you are beyond them. THAT cannot be witnessed or experienced; you can only be THAT. You always are THAT, but are distracted from that recognition by the world.



Robert Adams

PART II

RAJIV:

Sir I feel the ways of the consciousness cannot be predicted. Sometimes she invites me to be a part of Her, which is oneness and sometimes I observe Her only as a witness. There is a clear subject (ME) and a clear object (consciousness) like today's dhyaan.

I am very careful not to put effort in bringing about this oneness. A thought does come but I am very watchful. Any such exercise of will would be "concentration" and not awareness of the Void. So any effort TO "BE" is actually NOT to "BE". It is still a kind of seeking, wanting to repeat an earlier experience.

EDJI:

Don't be afraid of making effort. A lot of homework is necessary before training becomes effortless. This is the fault of many new teachers, requiring no effort. No homework, no effort, means no deepening. Instead they tell students they don't exist and any effort creates a dichotomy that creates a barrier to becoming one with consciousness. Perhaps this will work if you are constantly in the presence of a self-realized being, but not if you are alone.

RAJIV:

The I-AM is the Samadhi state, the pure oneness state. It is in this beingness state that one is introduced to the blissful consciousness. This is the natural joyous state of one being empty of all identification except that of consciousness itself. I am the blissful consciousness.

"I am not Rajiv, not a son, not a father, not a disciple, not a dealer, not a yogi or a jnani, etc." I am what I was before all this identification took place.

I bow at your feet again and again,

RAJIV:

Edji, I feel the Master's Grace all the time now. Yes Sir the Oneness remains most of the time now.

During waking stage:

Oneness remains like before. Heavy intoxication remains with 3D effects of objects most of the days. The objects seem closer to me than usual. Thoughts/emotions are unreal now. I find it "hard" to identify with them but I am learning to "act" in front of others just to remain "normal." It is like thoughts/emotions come, I watch and then I decide how to react. All happens quickly but automatically. The consciousness takes care of all that.

I am not practicing watching or being aware consciously, it is just happening on its own Sir.

Nothing disturbs the intoxication or blissful awareness; I am watching a new movie show each day. :-)

I really wonder what the hell most people are doing, wasting their life over petty issues. They are missing the real fun. This is one thought I can say I usually identify with hahaha...

During Dhyaan:

I sit crossed legged but do nothing. I simply look at the void. An hour and half pass like a minute. The void sticks to my forehead seems closer than usual.

I am beginning to be aware of two states during my dhyaan. One is waking state where I witness the void in front of me and also if any thought intrudes (this is automatic, no effort). In between suddenly I realize images coming from nowhere; a few absurd and meaningless images and thoughts come to fore. I am in dream state. This is the calm dream state. I see it and as I watch it I am back to waking state.

So I now shuffling between dream and wakeful, wakeful and dream states.

Since I observe these states I am obviously not the void, not the wakeful state and not the dream state. So now I try and see what exactly am I? Only the void ahead of me can try and figure out the real "ME," the witness.

But it is like a void ahead of me watching the void at the background.

But as I was watching from the void, the attention towards the "ME" is felt at the heart center. The real ME may not exist as an object but is felt as another Void at the heart center. This is where usually the void melts into, meaning I get a sinking feeling like the void ahead sinks within the background void "ME" at the heart. Is it so Edji?

EDJI:

This is all illusion. Don't get lost in all these apparent voids and objects. Pay them little heed. Although this is fun, the understanding is only of appearances, not the unchanging real. Not of YOU.

In the end there is only one Void, but it has many aspects. Pay careful attention to the appearance and quality of each void, and whether any "feel" like the subject, the witness. You want to focus on the source, the sense of I, the subject, not the myriad of forms, thoughts and voids perceived by you.

RAVIV:

In both the above there is only a void emptiness which is merging with another void emptiness. But WAIT, then I realized the background void cant be ME as I can witness the merging of the two voids. So where am I then? Am I the one who is witnessing all this merging too? IS IT SO?

EDJI:

Of course! Right now you are realizing this as an understanding, a concept. But a point will come when all states are seen as unreal and apart from you, and you are that witness—the subject, but you can't grasp the witness as an object. You just have to be the witness. You cannot become conscious of the witness as an object.

RAJIV:

So is it that the void ahead and the void at the background which I considered ME is just ONE void and the real ME actually cannot be known or experienced or even pointed out. In that sense I don't exist. Is it so Master?

EDJI:

Yes and no. You are paying too much attention to conceptual understanding.

On one hand, I will say yes, it is so, and provide pointers toward the final understanding in terms of another conceptual context, which are a separate set of pointers:

The Void exists as a property of mental space and contains all of consciousness, but is not you. This is a property of the subtle body, which in turn is also a concept.

Deeper is the causal body, which is a deeper Void; no experience here is possible. Only total not knowing.

You are beyond both as the subject.

Your only knowledge of your deepest existence comes from awareness of that which is not you; i.e., consciousness, Void, the body and the world. You can only BE that deepest self.

But you have to pass through the causal body yet and give up all knowledge and knowing. I must repeat, this is a pointer, a concept to free you from concepts. It is a conceptual justification for a real need to reject all concepts. It is a call to become completely stupid, with a mind like a brick.

All that you are experiencing is unreal. It is mind and the play of consciousness. In the real Void, all this disappears. Your mind is playing tricks on you creating all these insubstantial entities and experiences. They are universal experiences, universal forms, yet they are only appearances.

Don't interpret yet about voids and all that; just witness the unfolding of consciousness. You need to get beyond trying to understand the unfolding of consciousness.

When all is said and done, when you complete your training, you are always aware of yourself as the subject, while the world is your emanation. You are aware of yourself as the subject as of now, only because you are still experiencing the world and body as object.

The greatest mystery is that you are not consciousness and the world, but in another sense it is you, it emanates from you. These are two different understandings that are only apparent contradictions. These sentences are both true as appearances,

but at different levels.

RAJIV:

"The void exists in mental space and contains all of consciousness, but is not you. This is a property of the subtle body"

O.k., all of consciousness is subtle body and what I am witnessing at the moment are experiences of the subtle body.

"Deeper is the causal body, which is a deeper void; no experience here is possible. Only total not knowing."

This is beyond the subtle body and so beyond consciousness itself. So knowing and experiencing is not possible here. But Sir if I do not experience anything how will I know at all this is causal body? Is this similar to a deep sleep state where I can not recollect any experience?

"Your only knowledge of your deepest existence is awareness of that which is not you; i.e., consciousness, Void, the body and the world. You can only be that deepest state"

WOW, I am even beyond causal stage. EDJI this looks like a long, long journey to me. Lot of learning and understanding is yet to come. I know I stand apart from consciousness so I am not that, but to truly "know" the real subject, I will have to go beyond the void and even casual state. This looks like a lot need to be done.

"Just witness the unfolding of consciousness. You need to get beyond trying to understand the unfolding of consciousness."

Master, I do not want to sound like I am trying to seek reaching somewhere through using effort, but I am very keen to further enhance my understandings regarding the causal body and beyond it. Since long I am only at the consciousness level exploring astral or subtle experiences.

EDJI who will lead me beyond and how?

Do I continue watching and witnessing the Void like I am doing at the moment? Is there anything more i can try to get beyond? Do I Put in more hours in dhyaan?

Please Sir your guidance is most needed.

EDJI:

All that I am telling you is of concepts, causal body, subtle, etc. None of it is truth. All of this understanding is of the mind which has to be transcended.

These terms correspond to different types or categories of knowing or not knowing which are universal.

Right now you are in knowing oneness, but that is illusion. Still you have to know it to go beyond it.

Next comes becoming totally stupid--letting go of knowing and awareness. It often feels like death--and it is death to the I Am consciousness. But you have to get used to being nothing. Now you are getting acquainted with the nothingness of the Void, but

a deeper nothingness means only darkness and not knowing.

You can feel what it is like--at least as it was for me--by sitting in Padmasana, and letting your consciousness leave your head and go downward into your body into the belly. Focus your mind in your belly. Deep sleep is another similar state.

At some point, you should experience a "dropping" of your conscious center to the belly, and just before it drops, it will feel like your brain is becoming hard and dense as a rock and your awareness of luminous consciousness will disappear. You will pass through a state like sleep where there is nothing at all. There is no you there. No consciousness, no experience.

After your mind drops into your belly, you will instantly become one with everything. All the world will be no different from you. There will be no division between your body and the world. The body disappears and you are the world in total Samadhi. This is your "glimpse" state carried to the ultimate end. What happens is the mind is no longer functioning and you are now witnessing, as you, that which is before the mind imposes order, forms, names and knowledge.

That brief period when the mind is dropping, is the state of forgetfulness that you will need to repeatedly experience. The apparent 'you' passes through it, from one state of knowing consciousness, to knowing nothing, and then perfect oneness with everything that is. You know it as a memory of the passage.

This stage is very important. It must be lived in everyday life too: knowing nothing, not having an opinion or idea. It is one way the world you dwell in is destroyed and transcended.

You are having great fun now in consciousness and I don't want to stop it. Just know it is imaginal, not real. Neither is forgetfulness. No state or body is real. It is a function of you, but no more real than a dream.

By the way, anything said about dropping the center of consciousness to the belly, is also true about that center dropping to the heart. It is just that the Zen way I practiced emphasized the belly rather than the heart.

RAJIV:

WOW! You have revealed to me the greatest secret of what means "self-realization" or actual Liberation. Most know that it is unknowing state but you have even revealed How. I am speechless with awe Sir.

One will switch from knowing (consciousness) to unknowing (thru the navel) and vice versa through repeated such learnings and experiences. And then know we are beyond such knowing and unknowing too. TOO HARD TO GRASP YET.

EDJI:

Actually, knowing the causal body will happen on its own as the mental experiences are seen through. The belly technique just gives you a method to understand nothingness better and more quickly. It is not essential.

RAJIV:

I intellectually know this now yet I will want to reach this on my own. You are 100% right Master that I am having lot of fun with Consciousness and still identify with Her. I shall continue to remain in that I-AMness. I shall Hold her tight to me as Maharaj says in Gita and let Her alone lead me there whenever the time comes.

I shall write as I get something new to tell.

I am most fortunate and blessed to know you Sir.

RAJIV:

So a Sadhaka now watches the arising and fall of all these 3 states in himself. And thus knows now that He is beyond them. Is this correct conception??

EDJI:

YOU are not a thing, but some “thing-less thing” is there. It is the subject, but it does not exist like the universe exists.

The concepts of existence and non-existence apply to the visible, the observable. But YOU, the observer, the subject, are beyond all qualities like existence and non-existence.

Don't try to figure this one out. You will understand when the time is ready.

RAJIV:

All this learning from you Sir is difficult to comprehend for me even intellectually. I am awestruck with the knowledge you have imparted to me today.

There is so little that I know. So little that those who write books on this subject know. Most Gurus are only talking in terms of concepts and only on the surface whereas what you are pointing is beyond everything one can even possibly imagine.

I used to wonder why you have not made your presence felt across the Globe with so much. But I now realize that this world itself is too has very few who will understand what you offer. You must reveal to the world all this. Sir for those few maybe, or else they will only wander here and there like I used to.

EDJI:

Yes, these teachings are rare. They are directed towards yogis who have practiced meditation, or Zen students. Most who read this will have no comprehension at all. Nisargadatta learned all this from his teacher and tradition, but spends little time exploring these experiences and issues in his talks. But he must have thoroughly explored all this during the three years after initiation by his teacher. In fact, it is difficult to understand Prior to Consciousness and his other books unless you know these pointers.

But Nisargadatta's teacher wrote on all this, as did Nisargadatta's Dharma Brother, Ranjit. I think Maharaj thought

it better to bypass all this instruction, as essentially, in the end, it is found to be unreal and conceptual. These concepts are pointers from a different time, but they fit you and other yogis who are well aware of the vagaries of consciousness.

In the end, after all is said and done, you can only be yourself. In Zen this was called returning to the marketplace.

RAJIV:

Today's dhyaan was really good in terms of "oneness" that I am experiencing at this moment.

After sitting for nearly 1 hour 30 minutes totally drawn towards the void, eyes fixed, I had to get up since my legs started paining in one position. Attention was drawn towards legs and dhyaan was interrupted. I felt otherwise I could have stayed there forever.

I am wondering after I got up what it is that draws me towards the void so much?

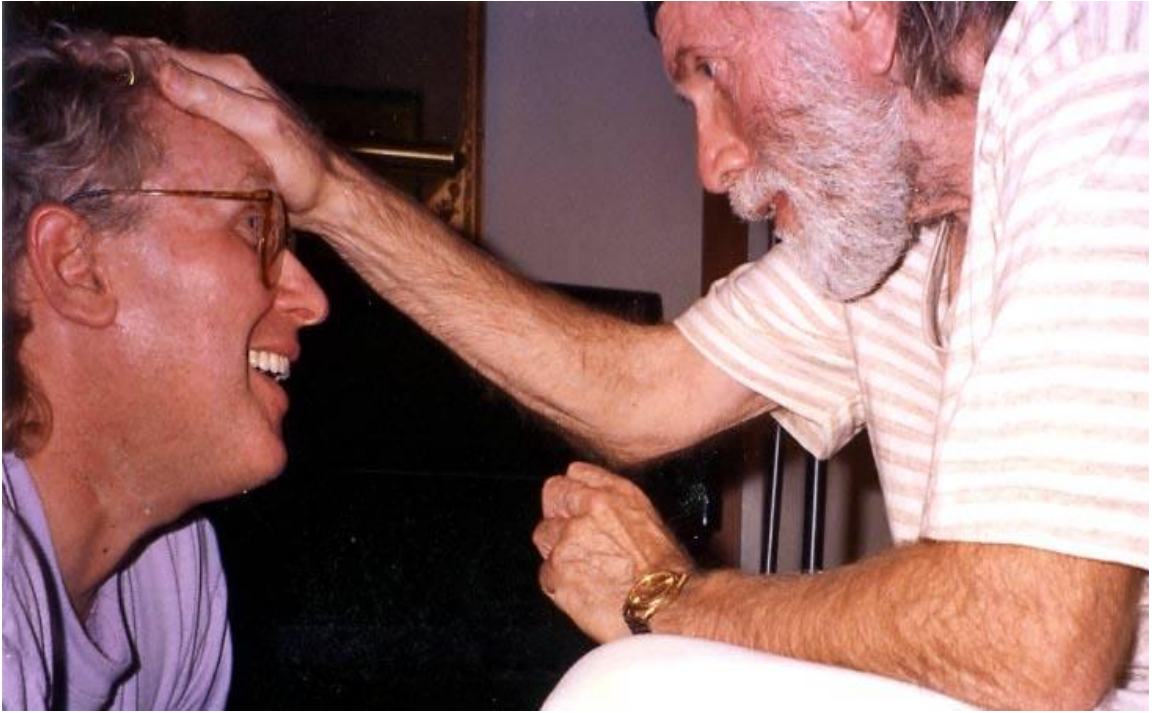
The intoxication is tremendous today, eyes in awe and I look in wonderment the beautiful world around me. The details and the colors, the brightness, the sounds and the instant connection they have with my "beingness." The consciousness (I-AMness) is so much in love with my beingness and vice versa. No effort to attend anything; I am attention itself.

I see all with eyes fixed without blinking much. I am in wonderland today :-)

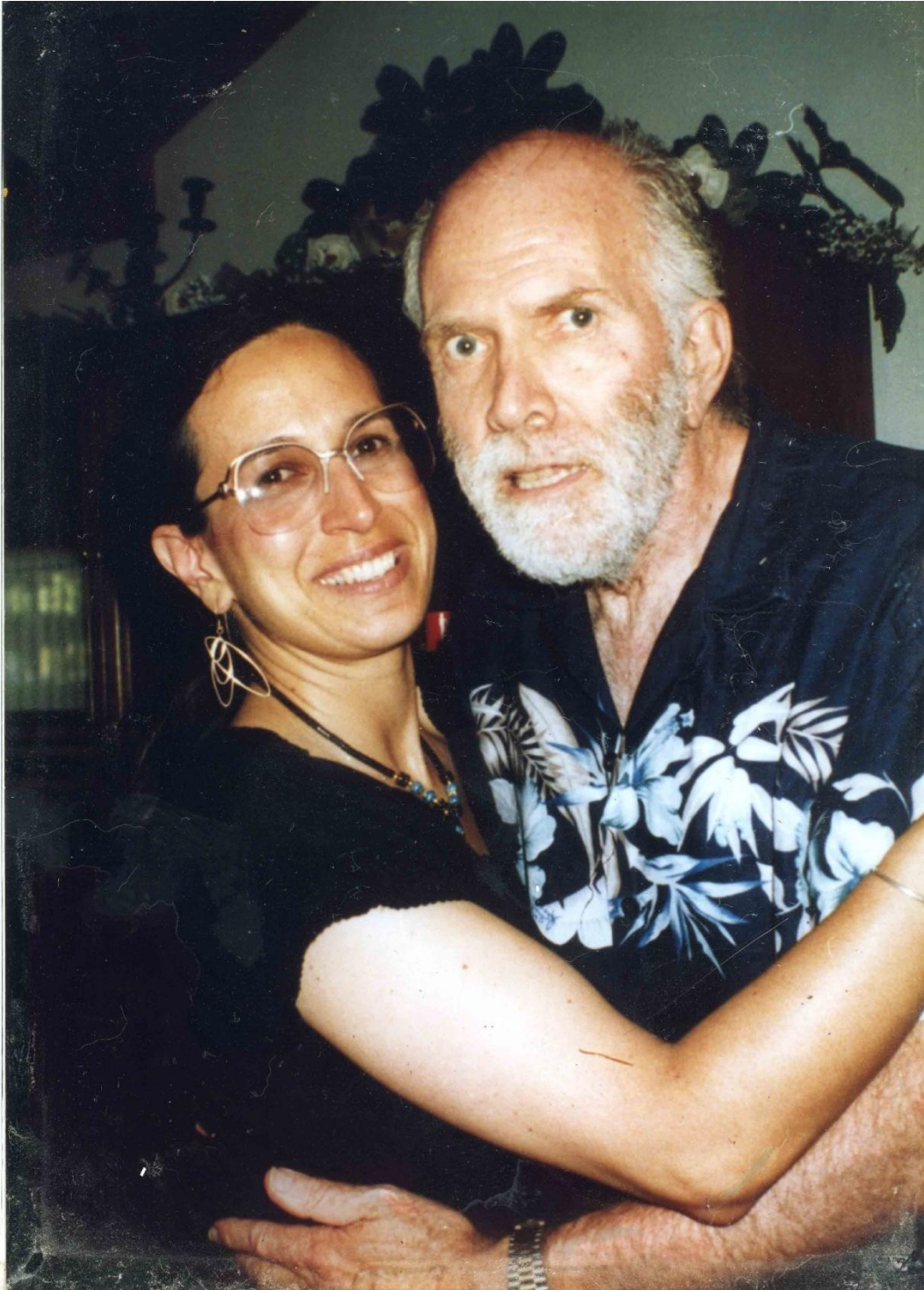
Ah ! You are doing all.

EDJI:

I am doing nothing. When you are free you can identify with anything you want, whether it be the body, the ego, Consciousness, the world, the Void or the Absolute. This is a gift. Enjoy it. Most people will have no idea what you are talking about, and most who read this will not understand because they do not practice meditation. They want to skip to the end where they are told there is nothing they need do. Lots of “spiritual” people are seduced by the apparent existence of a path where they only have to read books and listen to talks, but without practice, they lack power and precision, and never gain the slightest idea of the infinity of forms and play of Consciousness.



Ed and Robert, 1992



Robert and Ed's Wife, Kerima, 1993

PART III

Sir Regarding my progress:

EDJI nothing is worth much that I can write in terms of progress yet few points I would like to share with you. I usually have a habit of writing down details immediately after each session even if it is just the same like before. It may just a one-liner, yet I have this habit.

1) I am beginning to feel tremendous oneness between my inner Being (at the heart) and the void ahead of me. It feels like an aching heart needs the oneness each session. Usually after the end of the deep session my ache or my inner thirst is over. So all is happening effortlessly and I am simply watching the inner flow of consciousness meeting the flow ahead of me (the void) everything is simply a flow of consciousness.

The oneness may not be dramatic in effect like my "being" growing in space but it is like a stream flowing from one river to another and vice versa. I am a simple witness enjoying all this.

2) Many times the Nada or inner sound is very strong and I feel drawn towards it. Few times I hear a shrieking noise in my brain, it is loud like an electronic device plugged in my brain and it brings a complete stop of my body and mind machinery. There is such silence as if "me" as a body and mind machine has stopped functioning.

I pass out for a little moment and when I am back usually my head is tilted forward on waking up. But there is no dream or

images. Mind/consciousness appears after a few moments though and I am aware either in dream or wakeful state of observing the void. I have no idea about the shrieking noise and its impact on my brain.

3) Today I actually noticed that I was taking active part in my dream image during my dhyaan. I was aware it is a dream and I participated in it for sometime and then became wakeful again. It is not my will though, Consciousness does all.

4) Many times a lot of itching (sort of vibration itching) takes place in my face when Nada is happening loud and I am disturbed by it. I usually try and avoid it but it is very irritating.

During office work:

Many times Nada can appear strong on me. It just comes anytime of the day. Other day I lied down on my couch as nada appeared and I figured out that the body itself is consciousness. I was in half wake, half sleep and I felt my legs and my body was levitating upwards. There was no body. It is only an illusion. There was no difference between my body and the consciousness outside of it. It is just a part of the consciousness and flowing around in the space.

Master I am enjoying the love of the flow of Mother towards me. Sometimes the bliss is so much my head tilts in one direction and I walk in thin air.

But sometimes it is like a calm sea after been hit by a tsunami, which is the one I love the most.

I know all this is unreal and I need to transcend this. But Sir I am helplessly drawn towards the Mother. I cannot let go of Her neither does She. I am only going to flow along with Her Sir. Master I know there is little progress but I am thinking very little about it. Sorry Sir.

You and Mother will decide when it has to happen.

EDJI:

You are in a perfect place Rajiv. Just rest, enjoy and play. You need to experience some of the infinite forms of the play without being taken in by it--just as you are doing. The period you are going through is a time filled with magic and appearances.

It is good you record all of these, because some day you will be a teacher and your notes will help you remember and can be published as a guide for others.

RAJIV:

Master,

Last night a dream shook me.

I was visiting a very dark and crowded place in my dream this time. It smelled and had very disturbing scenes.

I saw animals of all kinds, dogs, parrots, donkeys, elephants, cats, cows, birds all tied together to be butchered Sir. Also there were men too who were tied for the same. They were to

be used for food. All of them were crying and yelling and shouting. They were telling us, “How could you use me for food?”

I was devastated. Totally moved. Even as I am writing to you I feel the pain of the animals and the men to be butchered. Many amongst us were buying and I could do nothing to stop them except be in deep pain and cry.

I felt no difference between them and me even when I know it was all a dream.

Consciousness took me there for a reason perhaps.

You see Edji, previous to my samadhis and oneness (since the two months) which are now flowing continuously due to Your Grace, I was a Non-vegetarian.

After the continuity of these samadhis I automatically reject non-vegetarian food of any kind. I have lost total taste of them and felt vomiting once when I had chicken in between my samadhis.

I never believed in the past that consciousness had anything to do with food but now the rejection of non-vegetarian food and this dream make me feel disgust of my past consumption.

I have no idea of the authenticity of hell or Hades but I felt I was visiting a really bad place. For me the purpose of this dream was to emphasize treating men and helpless animals alike. I do not know but it has rattled me to pieces and I am in pain even now.

Do you think non-vegetarian food should therefore be avoided at any cost in the early stages by a Sadhaka, and not wait for the rude awakenings later in advanced stages of consciousness like in my case?

EDJI:

It is very curious. I was going to ask you yesterday whether you were a vegetarian or not. It seems like I asked you in your dream.

You understand now why I am so protective of animals? There is an extraordinary amount of pain and guilt in anyone who kills and eats animals. When you stop, good things happen almost immediately.

Yes, being a vegetarian is important. Robert stressed it. He said eating meat not only held you back, but created pain inside the person who ate meat. Yes, being a vegetarian is of immense importance, not least so to the animals.

RAJIV:

Master,

I need a little clarification:

These days dhyaan is immediate. As soon as I sit in my asana I am engulfed within the void. It is nothing dramatic just that the oneness is extremely soothing and gentle now. There is no strain, the consciousness is all and I am that. This oneness is beautiful. It is my love for the void.

My question:

- 1) As you are aware Sir, I oscillate between wakeful oneness and dream state in between my dhyaan. Nowadays I catch the dream state instantly, watch it and then I am back to waking state. Today I observed that on reaching waking state the Nada sound intensifies and I move deeper into the void.
- 2) Every dream state that ends brings me deeper into the void and very often I see flashes of lights and blissful wall of bright light ahead of me. This disappears as I go to dream state where I watch an image-taking place. As I watch the image I know its dream state, I go to waking and then I experience the deeper blissful cool Void with flashes of light. Is it ok?
- 3) After around 1 hour or more of practice in one position, I feel the body getting heavier and heavier. In fact, I felt I may lose balance and body position. It is not that my mind is in my body during the dhyaan but after an hour or so a certain awareness dragged me to my body today.
- 4) My dhyaan wasn't complete so I lied down continuing my Dhyaan. Even there I was oscillating between dream and waking state.

So Edji is it ok to lie down if such a discomfort happens and complete another 45 minutes of dhyaan?

EDJI:

Be gentle on yourself. Stop if things become too uncomfortable. I think next you will be dragged into the deep sleep state attached to the body. So don't worry. That is only a guess.

This used to happen to me for years. In the afternoon, I used to be dragged down into unconsciousness every day for about an hour or two. I would become totally unconscious--asleep--but then a bright white light would appear and I would fall into it helplessly. But that was near the beginning of my sadhana. This "sleep" of course was the causal body.

I was working in a library at the time, and had to try to find a quiet place to hide where I would not be seen going unconscious. It was pretty funny.

But don't get too caught up on explanations. Essentially there is no causal or subtle bodies. These are concepts used to explain a certain range of phenomena that are universal. But never fear what happens. It is all illusion including the beautiful samadhis. For me they are no longer necessary. Nothing is needed, required or sought.

RAJIV:

Sir sometimes I do fear losing control. Not necessarily during dhyaan only but during the waking state. My heart pounds blissfully as I watch it happening. Every strike is like a temple gong striking my inner self into an indescribable state of helplessness and joy.

The state is difficult to describe. All I feel at that moment is to be left totally alone in seclusion but it very often doesn't take place. I get disturbed by noise; everything seems to disturb that helpless state of mine.

In the office I can sometimes lie down if Dad and partner are away otherwise I am forced to just be. Lying down seems to provide some relief from this. It is a state of tremendous self-surrender and helplessness.

EDJI:

It is a wonderful state. I used to get quite upset when disturbed and not allowed to be in it. But all experiences and states pass, and with that realization comes a surrender of peacefulness in every state and experience. Your real state is the 'background'; experiences come and go. Even the term background is misleading because it implies a direction and place and experience. It is better to say it is the support for all experience and consciousness.

RAJIV:

I experienced something like death tonight.

I am writing to you at 1:30 am just after this experience.

After my brief night meditation in my bed I fell fast asleep at around 12 midnight.

I then woke up to a sudden state, a state where I felt I am dying.

It is mentally disorienting in the sense it is very scary. I felt like I had little control over the proceeding. My sense of "beingness" itself was at stake. I remember clearly I did not like this unknown phenomenon-taking place, as there is a lot of fear of what is happening.

I thought to myself very clearly "I AM GONNA DIE"

I then extended my hand over to my wife next to me and told her repeatedly, "hold me fast," "hold me fast."

She held my hand in her sleep and that's when I was back to waking state again

I got up perplexed and started to recollect what exactly took place. I was still disoriented and startled.

Master what do you make out of this??

EDJI:

It is a wonderful development! At last you are experiencing fear. Your ego that is watching the whole process is afraid. The ego is a strange thing. It does not really exist, but it appears to exist, and in that appearance, takes on the role of an entity, and that entity appears to fear its own demise. In fact, there is only the emotion of fear that arises in certain contexts, lives briefly, then disappears into the Void, just as do all thoughts and other feelings. As long as you think the ego is real, it will control your mind/body behavior. When you see through it, it will wither away.

In the meantime, don't run from the fear. Open heartedly accept it. It is nothing more than another movement in the heart.

The fear will come, terror even, but it is the non-existent ego that will die, not you. Let it die! By die, I mean you see through it, that it is unreal and has nothing to do with you. Then it instantly loses its power. Sometimes this comes as a single dramatic experience, a deathlike experience so to speak, or more often, gradually as the ego's devices are repeatedly exposed by keen attention.

RAJIV:

Sir it is too scary. Why does it feel I am really dying literally? I was wakeful when the feeling existed. Now I remember it has happened to me in the past too. That time too I had got up from my asana totally disoriented.

So sir it means I am reluctant to know the death state for I will die.

So a deep sleep state itself is the casual body experience, which is the death state of no experience?

EDJI:

Because "you" are literally dying; not the body, not your true self, but your body identity as Rajiv.

This is a real death of the ego, but the body survives and the deepest sense of self survives. Only the thought processes

identification dies, identification with thought and identification with the body.

Take a look at the fear; don't run from it. It is nothing. You are nothingness. This is your first real test.

Even if you fail now, the ego death will sneak up on you later when you least expect it and complete the process.

Have fun with it. It is not real. None of this is real.

The ego death happens at the mind level. It is the real death of the ego, which is just a thought bundle. It breaks up and you are free. Your identity changes from bodymind to everything and nothing.

You are still identifying with the body and 'I'. This identity has to be transcended permanently at some point. The Samadhis point the way.

I am sure you have heard of Ramana's death experience, but if you have not read the following. Don't believe the conclusion he came to but note the experience. The following is from Michael James "Happiness and the Art of Being" available as a download from his website: <http://happinessofbeing.com>

"Ramana spontaneously attained the experience of true self- knowledge one day in July 1896, when he was just a sixteen-year old schoolboy. That day he was sitting alone in a room in his uncle's house in the south Indian town of Madurai, when suddenly and with no apparent cause an intense fear of death arose within him. Instead of trying to

put this fear out of his mind, as most of us would do, he decided to investigate and discover for himself the truth about death.

“All right, death has come! What is death? What is it that dies? This body is going to die - let it die.’ Deciding thus, he lay down like a corpse, rigid and without breathing, and turned his mind inwards to discover what death would actually do to him. He later described the truth that dawned upon him at that moment as follows:

“This body is dead. It will now be taken to the cremation ground, burnt, and reduced to ashes. But with the destruction of this body, am I also destroyed? Is this body really ‘I’? Although this body is lying lifeless as a corpse, I know that I am. Unaffected in the least by this death, my being is shining clearly. Therefore I am not this body which dies. I am the ‘I’ which is indestructible. Of all things, I alone am the reality. This body is subject to death, but I, who transcend the body, am that which lives eternally. The death that came to this body cannot affect me.”

“Although he described his experience of death in so many words, he explained that this truth actually dawned upon him in an instant, not as reasoning or verbalized thoughts, but as a direct experience, without the least action of mind. So intense was his fear and consequent urge to know the truth of death, that without actually thinking anything he turned his attention away from his rigid and lifeless body and towards the innermost core of his being - his essential, unadulterated and non-dual self-consciousness ‘I am’. Because his attention was so keenly focused on his consciousness of being, the true nature of that

being-consciousness revealed itself as a flash of direct and certain knowledge - knowledge that was so direct and certain that it could never be doubted.

“Thus Sri Ramana discovered himself to be the pure transpersonal consciousness ‘I am’, which is the one, unlimited, undivided and non-dual whole, the only existing reality, the source and substance of all things, and the true self of every living being. This knowledge of his real nature destroyed in him for ever the sense of identification with the physical body - the feeling of being an individual person, a separate conscious entity confined within the limits of a particular time and place.

“Along with this dawn of non-dual self-knowledge, the truth of everything else became clear to him. By knowing himself to be the infinite spirit, the fundamental consciousness ‘I am’, in which and through which all other things are known, he knew as an immediate experience how those other things appear and disappear in this essential consciousness. Thus he knew without the least doubt that everything that appears and disappears depends for its seeming existence upon this fundamental consciousness, which he knew to be his real self.”

RAJIV :

Thank You Master for this. This will really motivate me to look beyond fear.

It is impossible to take this journey without a God-realized Master. I am blessed to have you next to me. Really blessed. And I am so glad many people are getting aware. Looks like your

message of "advaita for meditators" and "meditation for advaitins" is seriously been looked into.

Hopefully these teachings of yours will be part of every serious seeker.

EDJI:

This could be your future. Perhaps in 3 years your primary "job" will be as a teacher.

But you have to finish your primary business of knowing yourself first.

Right now you can be a teacher for 95% of spiritual students where they are.

RAJIV:

Master,

To really "know" myself is all I want at the moment. This is the only burning desire within me. As you rightly say it is still unfinished business.

I have no idea about how good I may be as a teacher 3 years down the line.

My heart wants that most should get to know the love of consciousness, which fills all needs and desire. But I also see most do not have that kind of thirst.

Few are happy with what they are, few are happy with all the mental knowing, only a few want to make the effort needed and the rest does what the "herd" is doing, that is following a Guru who gives mass teachings for false sense of security. Most do not realize the urgency to know the true self.

EDJI:

There is nothing more important than knowing who you are. Don't put too much energy into teaching and writing long responses.

This is just a practice for you.

I would not blame you if you gave up everything now and just went somewhere to be alone. As it is, something could come up, some family disaster or something, and take too much time and you can lose everything through the distractions.

RAJIV :

Absolutely Master.

Thank you so much.

(NOTE: Missing here is a question from Rajiv asking about teaching in general and how to approach different types of students. It should be noted that many Kriya and Kundalini yogis began writing Rajiv seeking his help with their progress after the first set of his dialogues with Ed appeared on the Internet in October of 2009.

Rajiv submitted his responses to these students to Ed for his review and comment before send the reply to the seeker. As such, Ed was acting as his mentor. This is why there is this comment not to spend too much time writing answers. Ed was afraid it might become too distracting. These letters may be published separately in the future as they focus on the experience of yogi practitioners, and few books explore this area.)

EDJI:

Most seekers just want entertainment or are curious. Many of Robert's talks were aimed at them. Robert's talks will help them sleep and gently point the way for many. And then sometimes, sometimes the deepest truth of his talks will take root in someone that seemed dull, uninterested and worldly and transform them in a short time. One can never know. Consciousness always is surprising.

Downplay any focus on the body or chakras in meditation. The body is a complete illusion. There is only consciousness on the manifestation level, so focus on the body areas just reinforces the idea that the meditator is a body. Even the subtle and causal bodies are illusions. They just are ideas that represent classes of experiences. It is important to understand, for example, that the experience of space, the initial void, is a subtle body phenomena, while the experience of nothing, of deep sleep, is associated with the mythical causal body, which really means the experience of nothingness, which everyone needs to know before liberation.

Only tell them to concentrate on beingness or I Am-ness, which at first feels associated with the heart for many, but gradually it is discovered that it is an imaginary nexus in consciousness, as is the body itself, which is witnessed from the Absolute. The words “witnessed from the Absolute” is only a pointer, a concept, so don’t get caught up in the notion or concept of a witness or things witnessed either.

De-emphasize the body.

In the future, get them to move the attention out of the head. That generates too much Kundalini experiences and energizes thinking. Moving to the heart gets them out of the head but increases identification with the body. Focusing lower gets them to the thoughtless state earlier, but a lot of people have a hard time focusing at that level. Definitely recommend them getting out of their heads.

Also, remind them that the body experiences are really an illusion. All that there is, is consciousness, and identifying with the body sustains that illusion. Assure them that the feeling I Am is really different from the body but feels like the body initially.

You see, the main purpose of the samadhis is to disidentify with the body, and identify instead with the totality of consciousness-Oneness.

At some point you realize you are that formless consciousness that contains all objects, which themselves are forms of consciousness.

After a long time playing with consciousness and the oneness thereof, you realize even after repeated identifications, the witness is still separate and YOU lie deeper than subtle body samadhis.

Therefore concentrating on any body center makes the person still think they are consciousness examining inside the body, when in fact, they are really consciousness examining consciousness.

RAJIV :

I feel the oneness at both centers.

If I close my eyes and feel the beingness which is normally felt at the heart center, I feel my attention also at the third eye simultaneously. Sometimes the void ahead pervades everything. I become the void itself. I see no difference except a space which engulfs everything. The "beingness" at the heart is at the head too and the void ahead too. All is one.

Is it ok sir?

EDJI:

Yes, it is all one, but still YOU, as witness are separate. You watch the oneness. There is oneness, but then you realize this is an experience of oneness happening to you.

RAJIV :

Master the real ME still remains hidden from me. No knowing yet of the ONE.

EDJI:

But you are aware; you just don't know it. You are aware that you always are no matter what experience or state comes or goes. It is the mind that does not know, because the mind can only know objects and all objects are impermanent forms, and are unreal.

You are still waiting to witness the witness as an object, and that will never happen. It is not a thing to be witnessed or experienced. It is beyond consciousness in the sense that the waking and dream worlds are modifications of your natural fundamental state brought about by the mind.

Instead, sink back into the “witness” and become it.

RAJIV:

Yes All I am doing at present is letting my beingness meditate on the void ahead. Most of times I feel tremendous oneness between them, a kind of flowing of consciousness from one to another and then becoming one. But there are times I feel I am only witnessing the void ahead.

After that I get into various dream images but on immediate awareness I am wakeful again, then dream image, then wakeful. Waking happens almost immediately as soon as I become aware

of the dream images. On wakeful witnessing again the void puts me in dream state. So all that is happening is my oscillation between dream and wake states.

In between I feel deep silence as if the outer and inner world is coming to a stop. This happens for a brief moment. The outer noises suddenly stop for a brief moment then begin again. Again On being aware the outer noises begin again. Then brief stop of everything and the cycle continues.

Apart from the fearful experience I had that other night. I have made very little progress Master. I realize that.

Yes maybe I will try and sink backwards from my beingness itself and see what takes place.

EDJI:

What do you mean by "The Void Ahead?" What is your experience?

Are you aware that you are witnessing the Void as separate from you?

Is beingness being witnessed as separate from you?

The oscillation between the two states, that silence you experience in between is it. That is what you are looking for.

RAJIV:

>>>> What do you mean by "The Void Ahead?" What is your experience? <<<<

Master the void ahead means the dark circle of nothingness, which we witness when we close our eyes. This void can expand or revolve depending on the state of my mind. Sometimes it is smoky and sometimes-bright flashing lights are witnessed in it. Sometimes it is like a dark black wall, absolute blackness with no movement. Sometimes, especially while lying down I can see me tunneling within too. Sometimes the void makes a clockwise movement too. Sometimes it sinks within my heart. So I have noticed these few things within. Yes I observe the void as separate from me.

>>>Is beingness being witnessed as separate from you <<<<

No. I feel the beingness is me.

The beingness, ME meditating on the void ahead and then many times the duality drops I feel both are the same. But to start with, it is me as beingness looking at the void ahead.

>>>> The oscillation between the two states, that silence you experience in between is it. That is what you are looking for <<<<<

Oh really. WOW. This complete brief silence, which is felt as if everything has stopped. The noises outside and within. But it is only for a brief moment as mostly the mind always interferes and I am awake.

Sometimes even while I am at work especially during the afternoon while alone, I get this very short glimpse or thought as if everything can stop anytime. But it is not like in dhyaan. It just a feeling that all can stop anytime. In dhyaan, it is outer noises lessening and feeling very distant, inner noise stopping too but then it is very brief.

Is this some advancement in understanding Master?? Is this ok sir?

EDJI:

The void you are experiencing is more like sleep than what Zen or others call the Void. There are many voids. The void you experience has lots of experiential activity. The Void of Zen is empty like space and embraces everything. It is absolutely clear, self-illuminated. It is the ultimate refinement of consciousness. It is this Void which is experienced when you are close to realization.

The one you experience is associated with the causal body type experience and sleep. You are oscillating between subtle and causal, or Samadhi and sleep.

That place in the middle is Turiya. I guess you are heading to stabilize there at some point. At that point you will see that Consciousness and dream are not you. They are experiences added onto you. That is awakening.

Gradually the causal void will dissipate, and the Void that remains will be vast, like the sky that interpenetrates everything, the world, you, your body, and is self-illuminated,

lighting everything. That is the Clear, Self-Illumined Void. Many consider that the end, but it is not.

The sequence of your experiences is different from mine but similar enough to comment.

RAJIV:

That place means the "SILENCE" between sleep and oneness. The deep silence where everything seem to stop is "Turiya" is it? Yes, I do get a learning that dream is missing and so is consciousness because there is a lowering of all noises outside and within me. It goes kind of blank and then in a moment I am awake too. The lessening of noises makes me feel that something has stopped because if consciousness is totally gone I will never get an experience. The experience is only on the noises and voices and of feelings lessening. At least this is what I feel in hindsight.

EDJI:

It appears so by your description.

You need to get beyond the need for experience. Experience is only of the phenomenal world and the Void. What you are is beyond that, although, as the absolute, as long as body and mind exist, you will have experiences.

You are that which witnesses all experience, not the experience itself, although you become one with experiences in various samadhis, which makes you believe for a time that they are you.

You spend far too much time attending the various voids rather than you. They are objects, not you.

(At this point a few days pass without communication.)

RAJIV:

Master since past three to four sessions I am experiencing dryness in my meditations. It was not flowing as usual and seemed unnatural. No oneness or bliss or joy was experienced. I was just witnessing the void ahead, the feeling associated with "beingness" was missing too as nothing was felt. So it was only "ME" and the void, no bhava, no oneness, only absolute dryness.

Even the waking state these past two days have been just normal.

Consciousness showing some different colors I guess. I am not disturbed of this at all as you did warn me about this in the past. I will simply carry on witnessing and being aware of everything as far as possible.

EDJI:

Dive into the I sense. There is you, and the void. Concentrate on the I sense. Amness is gone but the I is still there. Sink into the I sense.

RAJIV:

There was only ME and the void, separate. I was witnessing it but everything was cold, dry. No fun :-)

In fact, there were no dream images either. Just a few thoughts here and there. No experience at all of any kind and no feelings.

All in all, a tedious session I must confess.

What is happening?

Sinking in the I sense will mean moving away from the void backwards. Is it not so?

EDJI :

Yes, moving backward. Apparently. All this experiential stuff is unreal. For you, attending to the I-sense may mean subjectively like you are falling backwards into some kind of entity. In fact though, you want to get to a place ultimately that is before I Am, before consciousness.

I wasted many years looking into the Void for “me.” Stupid mistake, but one often taught in Zen because of its emphasis on void and emptiness. The same is true I believe of the Tibetan meditation emphasis on the Void. The various voids are only different refinements of Consciousness, and ultimately you want to take a position before consciousness.

The dryness you felt is common, in fact most common. Lots of people give up after a few months. You are leaving the subtle body behind. It will be more available after you attain, but these are necessary categories of experience to pass through. You must understand everything about Consciousness and the

absence of consciousness.

You will notice that YOU feel unchanged as a result of having samadhis, or not having them. YOU are unchanging. Only your emotions, thoughts, and experiences are changing, and they are not you.

RAJIV:

WOW. Everything you say is the Gita itself, the Bible for us.

WOW

Yes, the emotions in terms of questions like:

Why I am not feeling that bliss or drunkenness?

Do I need to sit more in meditation? Am I erring something in practice, as earlier ones were smooth and natural? Have I lost Grace? Can I will myself back the same state?

These were few questions which arise.

But Now I know all is well. So I just carry on without expecting any experience. The mind always looks for an experience to validate progress. This needs to be tackled somehow.

I will take refuge backwards at the I-SENSE.

Will let you know Master.

Am too indebted to you in all humbleness.

EDJI:

There can be no validation of nothingness. You are there unknowing, and then consciousness appears. Later it disappears. You know you are because you have seen consciousness come and go. You are that knowing principal which is prior ontologically to the experiences.

RAJIV:

Master,

In evening meditation I got a new learning.
I experienced the sinking effect backwards.

I felt a great desire to meditate as I reached home from office. I was experiencing a stirring in my heart and certain heaviness in my head.

As I sat for my meditation my eyes locked at the void ahead. There was only the I as the witness and the Void and lots of noise outside.

I felt a certain pull backwards and I moved along backwards with it ignoring the void ahead of me as you had instructed me. Soon I felt the pull was gaining momentum. I felt the quality of noise different. The noise in the house and outside were lessening and then increasing from time to time. Meanwhile the pull backwards was gaining more momentum. I lied down instead and then the speed really started to catch up. There was this hammering at the third eye and everything ahead of me was getting pulled inside my stomach. The void, Me, my body which

was perceived as consciousness, were sinking at solid velocity in my navel area. It was as if everything was getting swallowed. I got scared and got up. All this happened in matter of minutes as I sat for meditation.

The sinking experience is still an experience but probably it was heading into an unknown territory. That's what scared me perhaps. Of course on reflection I am regretting why I got scared.

EDJI:

This is a very good sign.

Your ego does not want to die. If you can, let go and be swallowed.

Eventually the sinking will be instantaneous and complete revealing a very different reality. Don't fear. You'll return to normal afterwards, but you have to let go.

RAJIV:

I AMNESS, the feeling of ONENESS which I felt during my dhyaan has left me. Now there is only the void ahead and a witness. That joy and bliss which was a bridge between my beingness and the void ahead has disappeared. The natural flow is missing. And dhyaan has become mere observing the void and the thoughts.

The oneness or I amness, which I experienced during dhyaan and most times, would keep the thoughts away. The consciousness

would bring the thoughtless state effortlessly but now without the I AMNESS suddenly I feel an influx of thoughts.

Yesterday though in the early evening, the IAMNESS returned with great intoxication and bliss. I loved when it was back. And I noticed how the background thoughts too did not disturb the state. The thoughts came at a snail's speed and I caught them at the very start.

This morning the lamness was missing and I knew it would be a tough job ahead. There is absolutely no feeling. No bliss, no joy, no beingness at the heart, nothing at all.

I am sorry I am bothering you with this again Edji and we did discuss this earlier but I feel in dhyaan the link seems to be broken. I am TERRIBLY missing the oneness Master.

Sometimes it just helps me to write a few things again to you. I am getting terribly attached to IAMNESS I feel which is not such a good thing.

These two months of IAMNESS were wonderful had become a part of living. I did not believe it would leave me soon. Now it appears anytime and goes away ESPECIALLY during dyaan.

I MISS IT SIR :-)

EDJI:

Keep on the I. Go into the I. Recede into the I. That is where the goal is.

You might even say the I Am is releasing you from her bondage and now you can find the real YOU who was enthralled with her.

Back in 1995 I rejected the bliss of oneness because I realized it distracted me from discovering my source--the Absolute.

Also, there are not just two things. There is the waking state and you. There is sleep and you. There is the void and you. There is dream and you. What is the common element? You have not investigated that I. You were distracted by a dancing consciousness. You are still conscious of all those objects.

So, who are you?

RAJIV:

Yes the I is the common element. I will just need to focus there and not get distracted by the bliss and oneness. I will only focus on receding back into the real "ME" in my dhyaan and waking states (by becoming the witness).

The real ME is the unchanging element, the permanent entity whereas all other things like sleep, dream, void, IAMNESS: all are added to ME.

Understood Sir.

EDJI: (Days later)

What is happening with following the I?

You have penetrated the gross and subtle body phenomena, and now need to go through the Causal body. You do that best by going into the I.

RAJIV:

Master I am actually still trying to figure it how it feels to be in the I.

Sometimes I feel I am the body itself, behind my beingness, located at the heart. Sometimes I feel I have still go backwards into the empty space behind my body. Sometimes I feel I am witnessing the void from the I and sometimes I feel I am witnessing going backwards into the I. So many things are actually happening.

But I do feel the separation now. The feeling is more "settled" at the back. Not much "bhava" or feelings just the feeling of stillness perceived at the background, a kind off "settled" feeling. Sometimes in between I perceive this silencing of space in small glimpses.

YESTERDAYS EVENING DHYAAN:

I was lying down. I had just planned to rest and watch. 20 minutes into my observation I could hear loud temple bells, which normally ring for 25 minutes or so. I got interiorized and in an instant I felt a fear and a disoriented feeling. I opened my eyes to hear that the sounds of bells were gone which probably meant I had gone asleep for 20 minutes. A dreamless sleep.

This fear and disorientation was on my returning back from the

dreamless sleep as I was conscious after that. So I had missed the process of being aware of falling into a dreamless sleep and had become aware of coming back into consciousness. This could be a probability but I cannot be sure.

I only remember a cold silence and stillness, cold because it was not very warm feeling and then the fear and the slipping disoriented feeling.

Please write your observation Master,

EDJI:

You are clearly aware that for 20 minutes you did not exist as an observation.

It is clear there is continuity even during sleep. There is a memory of the sense of existence without any direct experience of being aware during that time.

That is a good step.

The I Am is very complex. The old yogis understood that and talked about the four bodies. The neo advaitins know nothing of this. They only want to question the I thought and look into waking consciousness as the all-in-all. They don't go deep.¹

¹ Nisargadatta's Dharma brother, Ranjit Maharaj, published the Amrut Laya now available from lulu.com. The Amrut Laya is the writing of Maharaj's and Ranjit's master, Sri Sddharameshwar Maharaj. This volume fully explores these bodies and the progressions, but does not much deal with the students' experiences or the methods. I should mention that Mary Skene, Ed's good friend of many years and Robert's right hand woman, went to India many times to study with Ranjit.

Now you are engaging the causal body type phenomena. You are penetrating under the level of Maya. It seems like there are many I's and many voids, and you need to become familiar with them as a category. The best way is not to explore the voids, but to continue backwards into the I. Sometimes it will seem associated with the body, sometimes it will seem like the invisible one who is the seer, just like you used to see two voids.

You are making progress, but this level--even though it does not exist as a reality, it is only an appearance--is more complex and difficult to get through than the subtle body you are leaving behind.

This means when you do attain freedom, it will be because you traveled the entire course, rather than dipped deep once or twice, and then a year later lost it. You will become a guide.

RAJIV:

Yes Master it does look difficult to get through. By will alone it is impossible. I can say with confidence that I can become ONE with consciousness through will.

A little effort and I can reach a thoughtless state and then the oneness is back. I am careful not to abuse this so I only tried this a few times and I did get the I-AMNESS back.

But this causal type experience is extremely impossible to will it to take place. It has happened on its own whenever it has. So sir is it not better that I just let it unfold on its own?

EDJI:

You can be more active than just watch.

You have to play with it. Sometimes you watch. Sometimes you back into the witness. Sometimes you merge with I Amness. You investigate. That is the real meaning of atma vichara. You are a scientist of the subjective.

Do what you want with I Amness. You are mostly done with exploring that level although she continues to entertain you.

RAJIV:

Pardon my ignorance on this subject of relationship between deep sleep state and causal body. I have a few questions and they may sound really stupid. Please bear.

Sir It does seem I was not aware for 20 minutes and then I did have a disoriented feeling and fear for sometime once consciousness set in. When I woke up there was a memory that probably I had a dreamless sleep with no experience.

But sir every night all of us experience a dreamless sleep. We all also have a memory that we went to sleep and we got up from the sleep. So in that sense we all engage in subtle/causal body phenomenon each night. Is it not so?

My dad can fall asleep on drop of a hat and wake up just the same. This intrigues me. What then is the difference? I know one is leading to self-realization and understanding and the other is

of ignorance even though there is no direct experience in both causal experiences.

Is it about control? My dad cannot control falling in sleep. I mean a deeply meditative person can control his astral body (bring about a dream state) or maybe bring about state of pure lameness as compared to a normal being who is engulfed in various thoughts. I have better control on lameness and even subtle body but not so the causal body.

Can we say then that with time the same deep meditative person can have better control over his causal body too? And this is what separates a jnani from others?? Is it so?

Please enlighten Master,

EDJI:

The control is not the issue. Both sleep and the causal body are states of unknowing.

The difference is that you can enter the causal body at will and be aware that you were aware of nothingness and then become aware consciousness again while someone coming out of sleep rarely looks at the transition that takes place. You can be aware that you are going into the not knowing state and when you are leaving.

Leaving the causal state, you become aware that YOU are that, in the background, who is aware of the coming and going of consciousness. YOU existed even when the body, mind and world did not exist. This is the state of "waking sleep." It is important

for you to realize that you exist even when there is no experience. It is the second step towards immortality. You develop a conviction that you continue to exist even during periods of no conscious experience. This allows you to gradually become aware of the unchanging background rather than the noise of consciousness.

No ordinary person takes deep sleep as proof of the immortality of his or her existence as the transition from the two states happens less often than with a meditator going into and out of the causal state, and the transition is harder to follow because body sleep is a “denser” state than the causal state “experiences.”

All the searching you are doing is done in the same consciousness available to everyone. Everyone has all the things you experience available to them, including I Amness and bliss, but they do not experience them or know what they mean because they are locked into conceptual systems wherein only the world, body and mind are real. When there is a focus on these projections, experience of the deeper states, including unity consciousness and complete happiness, is absent.

The more time a person spends abiding in deeper levels of I Amness, the more available blissful and happiness states become, which tend to drag “you” deeper. This is the actual process of grace.

Also your experience of the causal body will change. The Void will change from darkness with phenomena happening in it, to the experience of a totally self-illuminated Void. This is the true

opening of the Third Eye as the Void is everywhere, within and without; containing the whole universe but centered nowhere.

RAJIV:

I am very fortunate and lucky to have you as my Guru. Your teachings may be understood by advaitins today but I can already foresee many bhaktas, yogis and advaitins and all class of seekers benefiting from your teachings in time to come My Lord.

EDJI:

They will not be appreciated by the new advaitins today.

Advaita today has been so diluted and watered down so that it appeals to everyone because it promises so much for doing so little. It is like a disease that has attacked the spiritual world halting real individual progress.

Neo-Advaita is everywhere, but it asks you to do nothing but listen to whatever guru is talking, read that guru's books, and realize that "I" does not exist. What results can be oneness, but that is just the tip of the iceberg. But more often it winds up being just a distraction into using the intellect to dismantle the intellect, which never works.

My own teacher Robert always talked about going deeper. He would say, if he were alive, that the deeper experiences contradict the prevailing Neo-Advaita viewpoint. Even back then, the common knowledge of Advaita was that consciousness was everything, and he told me much hostility would be directed

his way if publicly he taught the deeper teachings I am giving you and others, namely, that consciousness itself does not exist. To the uninitiated, this would seem like an unappealing existence of nothingness--something to be avoided at all cost—rather than a place of complete rest and peace that it is.

RAJIV:

I am putting in lot more effort than usual these days. It is normal now to sit for two hours witnessing the "proceedings." Some sessions are hard work where nothing actually is taking place even as the mind expects something can happen anytime. I decide no matter what I will sit and watch. I am watching all the expectations and the thoughts that the mind brings in, the deep yearnings and the oneness, or times where no feelings take place.

A few sessions happen on their own. Within minutes the thoughts are absent and I enter dream state and after few oscillations between dream and waking, I then witness the sinking happening below the navel. It stops on its own. Maybe the mind interferes as it is looking forward to the causal state. But the good thing is that the sinking is happening more often now as I move backwards and gaze intensely at the void in front.

But some sessions nothing happens at all. I can sit for more than 2 hours and still nothing takes place, not even the dream state. I sit nonetheless till I realize I need to get up to go to the office.

This not at all disheartens me. I remind myself no matter what, I will keep with the work. Being aware is important and I remembered your instructions that sometimes effort will have to

be made. During that time I usually sit witnessing by falling backwards into the I and watching.

Master, may I have your blessings?

EDJI:

You always have my blessings. It is difficult when nothing happens and you want something to happen.

After you slip from consciousness, you should fall through the causal state to something entirely different. We'll see what your experience is. Consciousness exposes different aspects to different people, so that when they speak for her, each has a slightly different message.

Just continue as you are doing. Become clearly aware of that feeling of I. There is the 'I' thought and the I AM feeling. They are different. Seeing through the I thought, and seeing that all objects are created by mind, and the mind does not exist, is the first liberation. Sometimes when that is seen, the I Am feeling also disappears and you are left in an emptiness where the world is gone as the world, and everything is seen as in your normal waking state, but you newly identify with the totality of your inner and outer world as a whole. The disidentification with the body is complete.

So attend to the I thought and the feeling of I. Don't pay so much heed to any void.

RAJIV:

Master, a few things about how I experience the I-Thought and I AM. I experience "I AM" feeling normally at the heart. It is a feeling of oneness or deep yearning towards everything witnessed. It is a feeling of love flowing and seeking melting to something, which is not perceivable (with the totality of everything around).

There are times when the I-thought exists and there are times it does not. Normally when I feel beingness or lameness, there can be few thoughts but identification is impossible. In that state there is only one thing, which exists, that is "I -EXIST" and nothing else I see or perceive is real. There is tremendous intoxication in that state. During that time the I-thought is not there ONLY bliss.

By I-thought I mean identification with the thoughts and not necessary that there are no thoughts at all. Though I can stop the flow of thoughts many times by being aware of the starting point of a thought itself.

Most times there is beingness that all is well. Nothing is disturbed and all goes on smooth and fine. But the real test happens when something unpleasant is perceived by my mind. This is when the I thought is most felt as an emotion in my heart, not a very pleasant feeling.

The I thought does exist when a personal loss or difficulty or an unpleasant personal event is expected to happen. At that time the results in meditation vary too.

But the undercurrent of blissful consciousness and oneness remains in spite of the identification with the I thought. It's a mixed feeling really.

EDJI When will this identification retire? Will this I thought ever die?

It is very disturbing till it lasts.

The pure oneness state is when the I thought is totally absent.

EDJI:

The I thought does not die. What happens is you see the illusory nature of the I thought and there is nothing to which it refers. When you see the emptiness, then everything is empty because all depends on the I thought. Then there is nothing anywhere, only oneness.

So there is something in you still that understands the I thought as real, as referring a separate personal existence as an entity. But there is no such entity. You do not exist.

RAJIV:

I would always question why does the I-Thought even arise when I know it is an illusion? I completely am aware that it is unreal. My awareness reveals this instantly. All the hopes or despairs the I thought projects is totally false, all imaginations. I see that almost in all occasions when a thought tries to identify and then I usually smile. This is instantaneous now. Not much effort goes in being aware of the I thought. I guess I have become more and

more sensitive to the emergence of the I thought. But I was probably guessing that to self realized souls the thoughts completely disappear. Now I know that it does not go away or die. It is just seen as something coming and going like emotions, lameness, dream states etc etc. What remains permanent is the background ME.

EDJI:

Good. You see through it. All thoughts are this way. All science is this way. No atoms, no electrons, no particles. These are all just shared concepts, as unreal as the "Present King of France."

The same holds true for the world around us: a world of forms, space and time is created when the mind projects a network of form over the formless.

When the thinking mind abates altogether as in various samadhis, the underlying "what is" is revealed, which is a world without form, the ultimate "glimpse," which was the term you used, where there is no separation between you and the observed. The mind in this state is not imposing its conventional maps of understanding. As you know, this is a completely joyful state. Still, this is not the ultimate, because it is still a world associated with the body's senses and projections. You are beyond that altogether.

And the ME you perceive and try to fall back into, still is not you. However, it is a roadway to you.

RAJIV:

Master

Last night meditation happened on its own. I did nothing except went along with it. No effort of any kind. I was lying down and feeling a movement at the third eye. My beingness at the heart center was bouncing in small spurts of intense longings and unexplained joy. I decided I will go along and meditate instead of falling to sleep.

I went to my meditation room and decided I watch the proceedings and rather flow with it. There was no direction, no motive, and no effort. It did not matter whether thoughts were there or not but there was an inner movement of a very different kind. In fact, I could call it chaotic. Nothing seemed to move as desired or anticipated. I was being extremely watchful yet I would get swayed in it.

My heartbeats were racing at full speed and so too my breathing. I was watchful as to what is happening. It did not scare me because it was surrender of joy. A blissful stirring happening at the heart center. I could hear the dogs barking outside and then I felt I was my breath. No other feeling. Suddenly there was nothing except that I was the breath itself. That went too.

I guess I woke up from an apparent dreamless state when I saw an unsettling image at the third eye; I saw that and thought this is a beautiful experience but it went away. There was no barking of dogs, some time seemed to have passed between the dogs barking and the reemergence of an image at the third eye. The

heartbeats were very normal and so was the breathing. I have no idea when they became normal.

I had nothing in my control. All just happened. I had just decided to flow with it and watch by sinking backwards to ME.

EDJI:

Very good. Nothingness. Silence.

Still you knew you existed afterwards. Knowing is of the mind. Without the mind there is no knowing, only being.

You knew afterwards, when the mind arose, that you had existed as being during a duration of not knowing.

Gradually the clouds will part and you will recognize the feeling of beingness that is in you all the time at the deepest level--that is, if you are not already familiar with it as what you call beingness.

That is the trouble with words; one can never know exactly another's experiences or understandings even when you use exactly the same words.

RAJIV:

Yes Master.

For me after a little time passes in the not knowing state there is a sign through my third eye. It is an unsettling feeling and an image is seen. In both occasions the images were geometric. But the feeling is as if I am venturing into an unknown territory. The

mind says so and becomes active and so I am back to consciousness. My understanding is that a little time actually passes before the occurrence of an image at the third eye. That I think is the unknowing state. I am resting in that state of no experience. When I am back, all experiences and understandings are an after thought.

Is this what happens after death Master? Do we just go to a deep sleep state with no experience?

Is it not a bit depressing that nothing actually happens there? All those who realized this state in their lifetime and those who did not realize are in the same state that is of nothingness, of deep sleep after physical death.

Master pardon my ignorance but then what is the difference between the two if both reach the same?

I can understand the unreality of I-thoughts, emotions, the love of consciousness, state of oneness and bliss. I see the sufferings inflicted by man towards another and the pain he goes through himself due to his mind and so I say all this searching and seeking and abiding in Self is worth every effort and blessings I received from Mother, past teachers and you have resulted in this understanding.

But Master does all this just end here? I mean is there simply nothing after we leave our bodies? We all retire back to our source. Is that all Master?

EDJI:

There is no individual immortality. You do not exist even now. Your existence as a separate entity is only an appearance created by mind and your mind hungers after novel experiences.

When your body dies, different bodies are born with different destinies, but all with the same root consciousness, the same beingness.

Consciousness as a whole is immortal, not Rajiv or Ed as individual body-minds. Your task is to find that before experiential consciousness root now, before you die. Then you know your true core is not touched by life and death. This is security, happiness, peace.

However, the not knowing state becomes more clear and more brightly experienced the more we know it, until it is like a continuous experience of beingness, even if there is not a continuous experience of knowing something.

Even now, that knowingness disappears for 7-8 hours a day, but that same root consciousness is manifesting as knowingness in someone else, while you continue to exist without knowing. Yet that lack of experience for eight hours does not bother you when you awaken, does it? It is only your mind that makes up a story of endless sleep without have direct knowledge of what that sleep state is really like, that makes it seem as if this were a boring and meaningless end. In fact, the loss of waking consciousness and earthly existence is much to be desired as the true value of the sleep state becomes known.

The more familiar you are with your existence beyond existence by settling into YOU, the less aware and the less you care about the phenomenal world. When death comes then, you are already beyond the world and it means nothing.

RAJIV:

Master by Beingness here you are referring to abiding in the Self. Is it not?

That is the state where I as a witness is more real than all the things that pass upon me as experiences during the day. Whatever I experience passes on. The background real ME is becoming more prominent as day passes by.

There is pain but it passes

There is joy but it passes

There is oneness but it passes

There is I thought sometimes but it passes

The body will undergo pain but it passes too

All emotions pass

Everything simply passes by and the effortless state of dhyaan reinforces the understanding that the background is the real Self. And the more knowing one gets of the unknowing state during dhyaan, the background Self radiates more. I am probably getting more than a hint of it now because nothing attaches itself with me for a long time anymore.

EDJI:

Yes, you are correct. Perfectly correct.

As you become more and more familiar with this state, the happiness increases and the wrongful identification with yourself as a body/mind disappears. Then you are no longer individual consciousness, but universal consciousness. Already the transition has been happening to you. Then the state becomes universally present and the world continuously seems a dream.

RAJIV:

Yes Master.

The transition happening is also because of your Grace.

I can understand about karma. ME as abiding in real Self watches all the pain and emotions. So there may be pain and mental fluctuations but they all pass. I am sensitive enough or rather made aware enough to recognize their coming but choose to watch them pass by or maybe seek a solution but never to identify with them as happening to real ME. So there is body pain, heartaches, I-Thoughts but none of it is me. All pass. All this is experience. In that sense, Karma is for the body and mind not of the background Self. This is understood by me. I am not the thought nor the body. The identification of sufferings associated with them is too short and they pass and I settle abiding in my real Self as a witness.

But Master I cannot comprehend re-incarnation. Who is re incarnating if not Edji and Rajiv?

What about communications with ones Guru after physical

death. Is that not possible EDJI? Please explain the after death state, Please.

Rajiv

There is no reincarnation. There is no you even now let alone a rebirth of a you. This is the truth.

What happens is that consciousness moves on and creates something entirely different from you and me.

On the other hand, you, after identifying with YOU, leave the world voluntarily to reside in silence and complete happiness. After the Turiya and beyond state becomes clear, the desire for the lower, human consciousness disappears and it is hard to hold you into that which is normal existence for others. It is only a dream and hard to remain involved when you know that. The world is seen to be crude and unimportant.

Robert had to take deliberate actions to remain involved in the world, otherwise he drifted off. Me too. That is why I involve in animal rescue and advocacy doings—to stay in the world.

There is no reincarnation because you do not exist now. You are only a temporary appearance. Me too. Identify with the totality, not with your body or mine, then transcend even that totality.

You see, Robert acts through me and does not communicate with me. I am but his puppet, but he would say the same about himself; he merely expresses Ramana through his beingness. In a sense then, we are only expressions of Consciousness talking to itself, yet we are also beyond Consciousness, as the Witness.

But instead of identifying with the individual body/mind, we can identify with Oneness, with the Void, or with the Absolute. Each person has a slightly different way of experiencing and expressing that beyondness.

The yogic theory is that the causal body reincarnates, not the gross body. Until one gains freedom from that causal body, reincarnation appears to occur. Robert says reincarnation happens to those who believe they are real. However, this is only theory. Personally, I don't believe any of it; it is only a theory and theories are for people with busy minds that like explanations because they enjoy intellectual entertainment and it give a false sense of security. It is much better to know nothing.

I prefer to look at it as consciousness is continuously unfolding in its own way and your body-mind is a trivial player.

And when it comes to karma, I take myself as being the only justice in the world, and act accordingly. You are justice, not karma. You have to embody justice; karma is only a theory to explain why we see no justice. There is no conflict between seeing through the world appearance and at the same time acting as a force of justice as if that appearance were real, because, in a relative way, it is real.

RAJIV:

EDJI,

Last night was "terrible" in one way and not so in another way :-)

I was lying down to sleep but just could not fall into it. An hour passed and then two hours passed by. I was getting a bit anxious why thoughts were disturbing me so much. There were influx of various thoughts and I was witnessing all of them. It was all automatic. I could not even let go not watching them. Three hours passed by and I thought I was nearly losing my mind. A part of me told me it was all unreal yet another part of mind was telling me I was treading wrong in my life. Stop all this practice and be human again, start living in desires and enjoy life.

I was witnessing all of these careful not to identify with all this, as I knew all this would pass. But it was getting tougher as the night was slipping away. I was starting to get a bit anxious. I observed I was actually looking deeply at the third eye and watching the flow of thoughts. Somehow I felt watching at the void ahead was resulting in more thoughts.

Very strange indeed. Where is all the bliss and joy gone?

For the first time a doubt slowly crept and a fear too. Am I getting depressed? Sadness filled my heart. It was a very dark night. Nothing seemed to work. My mind was extremely active during the whole time even as my body was tiring with all this. I was feeling frustrated and extremely helpless. The mind was telling me see how others are sleeping well and you are losing every bit of sleep. You are disturbing your set life and your family.

Yet another part told me do not listen to anything the mind tells you. It was one mind against the other. All of this was thought

anyways and I realized that. Even as a witness, I was getting engulfed in the war between the two. The void ahead was alive and so was my mind. There was movement and stirring happening at the void ahead and the mind was active catching them. There was no peace at all.

Then suddenly out of the blue at around 5 am I remembered your teaching. A voice told me stop all this witnessing NOW. Just move backwards to the real Self and stay there. Just be aware of that state. DO IT NOW.

I turned my attention away from the void, the thought and moved towards the background. It is felt as a totality of the body first and then it is felt as something beyond the body too.

As I connected with that all thoughts were gone, a natural joy and sense of happiness and security was felt. It was like a child finally getting to sit on his mother's lap. Such was the sense of security and warmth. The sinking into the background brought about a natural calmness, joy and total freedom from disturbing thoughts. Next I knew that I was in a dream state, knowing I was dreaming and I was finally happy in my dream too :-). I slept for maybe three hours or so but do not feel I missed much of it.

For the first time ever I realized that looking intensely at the third eye exploring the void may not be such a good practice after all. It is best just to sink backwards and try and BE one with that state. There is tremendous security and stability there. Rest is all play.

EDJI:

Good lesson!!

Yes, I spent many years exploring the Void, probably as deeply as anyone has explored it. But opening the Void to realize the clear light of consciousness only opens space for realization of the emptiness of thoughts and the physical body to be realized in. No enlightenment happens because of exploration of the Void.

That is, the clear void experience opens the inner imaginal space allowing one to see how the network of thoughts creates both the appearance of a world separate from you.

Going backwards into the self always seems to bring happiness, even if you can only go back as far as the body sense.

The Void is a vision sort of thing, associated with the brain and eyes. The I-sense is not.

Good for you!

Not one in a thousand will understand this unless they have turned their attention inward for a long time and explored their inner world. Few of the neo Advaitins could follow this, or they think it is only your own personal experience, and not some universal experience necessary before awakening. Some of them think just thoughtless waking consciousness is the Absolute.

RAJIV:

Ah yes Master. But for you I may never have learned this lesson at all.

Just moving backwards is all that there is.

I am completely done with exploring deeply the void. It can play havoc with one's mind and thoughts and with one's being. It is real bad practice though I am not sure why sadhaka still choose to explore them. That may be the problem with deep meditation. Most feel meditation is third eye exploration and are misled. It is the "beingness" whether you feel at the heart center or as the totality of the body. This is where we all need to abide. This is all we need to reach rather than explore further and further. I am completely done with this.

Ah Master what a lesson you gave me last night.

I always valued your teachings but some understandings come only by direct experience. I went through this very important lesson and nearly lost my mind. I nearly went mad.

The feeling of beingness itself melts all searchings and seeking. Moving backwards is much safer and secure practice. It instantly puts the mind off. This is such a learning.

I am done with all the void stuff for sure. WOW.

After this even if there is no further learning I will still consider my life worth living.

RAJIV: (A day or two later)

I am undergoing a major change in perspective. As I feel the connection growing backwards towards "ME" nothing ahead of me seem fascinating as before or holding my attention.

Actually ever since the background ME took more prominence, I do not feel the need to witness my thoughts, my body or even consciousness (oneness). BECAUSE IT DOES NOT MATTER WHETHER THEY EXIST OR NOT. All these are now viewed as ONE consciousness: body, thoughts, emotions, I-amness, beingness or oneness).

Attention is drawn at the back now and to the consciousness as a whole. And that consciousness as a whole keeps changing from appearing to non-appearing.

So witnessing of thoughts or body or emotions or oneness as separate from Consciousness is no more there. It is all ONE part of Unity Consciousness, which appears and disappears. Consciousness is taking forms as Rajiv, joy, sadness, thoughts, body and even beingness. In fact, everything perceivable now is Consciousness and nothing of it MATTERS anymore.

Individually they do not warrant my attention now. They may or not exist. I simply let them take whatever form consciousness wants to be in. I may choose to even not witness them because how does it matter?

I cannot communicate in words Master all this feeling. There is tremendous inward silence and happiness and everything at the consciousness level is noise. I, in fact, get a voice within which

is contrary to what the masters or books I read in the past have said about witnessing every thought or about being aware. My feeling says IGNORE all this. Do not even BE. You are not even a "Being".

Till yesterday evening I was in a major depression. There were millions of conflicting thoughts and varied emotions. Doubts filled my mind and fear had suddenly taken control of my being. All I told myself is that all this will pass. This is not ME. There was tremendous darkness and I was engulfed in tremendous grief and sadness.

Today morning has been very different. I feel I have woken up to a new reality. Perhaps there is no witnesser even because witnessing is missing many times and no Being. There is only happiness and peace. Anything else, even if they exist or not exist, DOES NOT matter.

EDJI:

Yes, yes, yes! Consciousness itself is trivial, changing, unreal. When it goes there is complete happiness. It is not real.

I am so happy that you have come so far so soon!

RAJIV:

Master nothing was possible without you. I am truly happy now. The depression was probably necessary last evening. Now there is an intense sense of security and a freedom from everything including consciousness.

Thank You Master a zillion times

EDJI:

Thank you Rajiv. Don't lose this place you are. Stabilize and grow there.

Finally I know Robert's understanding will not die out.

The not-knowing state will continue to reveal more and more, but in a completely different way than consciousness did.

RAJIV:

Master,

WHO EXACTLY AM I???

I do not identify with lamness anymore. The totality of consciousness (lamness) is whatever I can perceive or see or feel and All of that is false, unreal and changing. Anything in front of ME is standing out as false and unreal.

But Master a few things are happening along with this realization.

1) I feel I am lacking in emotions and feelings. Oneness is felt sometimes and with it extreme bliss and joy but I care not to pay too much attention to it. It does not matter just like thoughts and emotions. I can choose to identify but knowing its true nature now I can choose to look away too. So many times most of these "emotions" which includes oneness find no taker or

perceiver as ME. Feelings of oneness and love for others have taken a backseat unlike in the past. I regret I have turned Cold Master.

2) There is a sleepy feeling and lack of interest in everything around though the body carries on irrespective. There is only body reaction and mental response with no real interest.

3) I am losing becoming a witnesser or becoming aware of everything unlike in the past.

4) When I try and be aware of my true background Self I find nothing. Not even feelings many times except a sleepy peace.

5) I do not know whether I am a witnesser or not (because being aware of everything is now absent). Things around me are happening on their own and because all is unreal do I even need to witness?

6) I do not know whether I exist or not (because I can not be traced or known)

7) I visualize myself to be a black background of Void and everything happening in front is not important. I only try and BE that dark void at the back.

Master WHO THEN AM I?

EDJI:

YOU are that to which all this is happening. YOU are the basis of the universe. YOU are that to whom the play of consciousness is

happening. YOU are that who witnesses the coming and going of everything.

YOU can never cognize YOU in the same way you cognize any duality as separate from you. You can only be YOU, and you always are YOU.

So you know that the world, dream, thinking are all unreal. They are added onto YOU. YOU are that which remains after the superficial false reality of waking, dream and sleep consciousness are removed.

You can't know YOU in the way you know a brick or another person, or even your own thoughts and emotions. You are YOU always and forever, and you know YOU are, by being YOU, not by finding YOU as part of a search.

All the emotions, Voids, dreams, understandings you have are imagination. YOU are not touched by any of this.

So, instead of searching for YOU, BE YOU!

RAJIV:

Master that is exactly what I am doing:

Just Being ME

But the question which arises is:

The mind makes me realize that nothing exists including my own self. When I am in deep sleep the mind or consciousness retires

and so does the whole world disappear. There is nothingness. There is no ME too as Rajiv Kapur. What remains cannot be known. So I cannot say for sure that I exist because in my humble opinion existence itself is a creation of mind and consciousness. Because mind is, there is existence. At the same time I cannot say for sure that I do NOT exist because I was there even when the consciousness was not.

So what I am is beyond existence and non-existence. It is a big question mark.

Secondly because I am not sure I exist or not, I am not sure that I am a witnesser or not. Who we all call the final "witnesser" may not even exist. Who then witnesses except my one imagination (ego or mind) witnessing another imagination (the world and its creation).

Hence I am finding the one we all call the witnesser also absent and present BOTH.

At this moment I am sure about only one thing and that is the "totality" of consciousness, thoughts, emotions, feelings, body, oneness), are all false and unreal. They are all added to me. But I am not sure that what I call ME as a feeling which is "I exist" is also not a part of this very consciousness.

Master I write this in humble ignorance, the understanding which arise after consciousness itself was deemed false and unreal.

EDJI:

You have not experienced your true nature clearly yet; yet you have in a way. You know that everything is imagination. That

knowledge is beyond imagination, it does not occur in the imagination. It is certitude.

You also know the background, which is not YOU, but attending to it is the direct roadway to you. So attend to it.

Don't be deceived by words like "Witness." This is a concept that is helpful up to a point.

In fact everything is you, but you have to isolate the root, what Nisargadatta called "Krishna Consciousness," as a pure experience undiluted and uncontaminated by the presence of the false consciousness of the world.

Yes, even the sense of existence is only in consciousness. You are beyond even that. You don't exist!! You are beyond existence.

RAJIV:

Yes Master I experienced the ME as my background. There is stability and happiness there and all other things isolated do not matter except that background. All was fine till the mind deceived me into thinking that even the background ME was an illusion. That is a mistake. That is why all feelings had got cold. I realize my mistake and am back to attending at my background Self to reveal itself.

I am warm again. I was misled by my mind. I will be careful now

EDJI:

The coldness and the totally absent Void are important to experience, because they get you out of experiencing your old experience in the same way. In a sense, this experience was good. You are total nothingness.

Again, that ME that you feel exists, is not you, but attending to it brings you closer and then grace takes hold and pulls you in all the way in.

RAJIV:

Yes I realize that. Anything experienced will anyways change. All dualities will appear and yet ME will remain unchanged whether as a witness to them or not. Identifying with them will go and so will witnessing them. What will remain is that I at the background.

All I have to do now is to remain in that I.

Today morning after I left home and reached office, as I was sitting at my office desk, a feeling arose from my heart. My heart beats a gong then stops then beats another gong. Each gong sends a blissful feeling across my entire existence. The feeling sinks deep within my heart, pierces it and even goes beyond it downwards, beyond the totality of my body and beyond eternity. All this happens in waking yet everything around me stops and is not worth a second look. I am waking yet total silence engulfs me.

The sweet gong says to me STAY HERE and sink, nothing beyond this is true.

Ah Master your Love and blessings know no boundary.

EDJI:

Isn't it marvelous? The sweetness of perfect happiness? Did you ever imagine such peace and happiness? And, there is much more that lies ahead for you. You are by no means finished.

RAJIV:

No Edji, I never imagined such a thing. It is self-contained and has nothing to do with what prevails outside of me. From within springs the fountain of immense happiness and joy.

All is due to You Master. Is this the state of the Self Edji?

EDJI:

Not Yet. Happiness is the experience of Turiya, but it is still an experience. It is the experience of the Jnani all the time, but it is still a state so to speak, Turiya is beyond even that. Happiness is the experiential result of being in Turiya, but is not itself Turiya.

RAJIV:

Strangely many things actually happened yesterday like it never did before in my life.

First was the heartbeats during waking at office time, which felt like blissful sweet gongs, engulfing my existence and extending

beyond it. Then the evening dhyaan which brought tears of joy as I discovered the amness as a wave riding and falling deep in the ocean of my heart.

Night time sleep was exceptional because I experienced both the causal and subtle phenomenon in a near dramatic manner.

As I laid down focusing my attention at my beingness at around 12.15 am, I watched my self-falling to sleep and then coming back to consciousness again and again. Then I guess I went off to sleep and the only thing I remember is that I was back to waking with a thud. I felt a body movement, an intense jerking at the lower part of my body and I was back to waking. I realized perhaps time must have passed so I looked it was around 2 am. That meant I was in dreamless state, as I remembered nothing.

I felt it was good. Next I remember was that I was getting lifted away from my body into a circle of dark revolving tunnel. I was sure I was out of my body and totally aware. Suddenly the movement inside the tunnel took speed and I decided I stop there. However when I stopped I had entered into a dream world of imaginary characters but I was totally conscious that all this was a dream. I understood I was enjoying a dream appearance. Then I got back to waking again and smiled. It was nice I thought.

These experiences may not be important in one sense but was in another when I realize that everything changed, dream came and went, consciousness came and went but I was still there. This waking world disappeared when the consciousness left and another world was created in a dream. The mind that created

the dream created the waking too perhaps with all its situations, problems and imaginary characters.

EDJI:

I feel great joy at how everything is unfolding for you. How funny, God wants to entertain you as well as awaken you.

Few would understand all this. Many are using their minds to understand their minds, but you are swimming in consciousness at deeper levels.

RAJIV:

Yes Master. I just need to hold to the I sense. The rest is all a dream anyway, since when we do that things just fall into place on their own as I keep ignoring whatever I see, feel or perceive in waking or dream. Strangely whatever your body is supposed to do it will regardless of whether you are attentive to the situation or no. Something takes care of all that whether it is God or Order.

EDJI:

So true, so true.

RAJIV:

O Glorious One, but for you I would never have known the Divine kavach (protective shield) which ignores "What is" and turns attention inwards to abide in the real Self. This "kavach" protects me from the ever changing form of consciousness and

hence the suffering which results from it. It is a strong fortress that your teachings have build for me over very little time and any serious sadhak can surely get the same result as I did. Unless one rejects consciousness itself it will be impossible for him to know about the inner fortress I am talking about here.

The simple steps your teachings offer are nothing less than a boon for those sadhak who are willing to make that transition inwards and not just settle at the level of consciousness. This will require devotion, commitment; concept free focused teaching and proper guidance. The results will then be visible for each to see.

The only question is are they really ready to dive within or still play around?

EDJI:

Very, very few are ready. I think only those who have practiced meditation or self-inquiry for a long time can go deep. Only these people have experienced states that allow one to see through the mind as opposed to trying to use the mind to see through the mind as most do.

The mind is not an instrument that will lead to the ultimate peace, happiness and realizations, yet most are exactly trying to do that with their minds, reading, thinking, analyzing, talking, quoting, talking classes, visiting gurus.

They race around on the surface of mind not recognizing that the mind cannot be used to go beyond mind, and mind creates

the world of appearance they are trying to see through or investigate.

They do not talk about practice, either meditation or self-inquiry. Going deep is not even considered because all they know is the waking world which is appearance created by mind. To get below that appearance they have to stop using the mind altogether and they won't do that.

That is why our dialogues are so important because you show with your great ability to introspect your deep experiences, that what most spiritual discourses are about is the mind and illusions in the mind, not that which is prior to mind and prior to consciousness itself, because what they call consciousness, is really the fantasy created by mind.

Our dialogues are for yogis and those taken by an unshakable thirst to know their own true nature and existence, and are not interested in theory, but rather in how to conduct self-investigation. These people are bold. They let go of books, theories and gurus, and strike out on their own to discover themselves. This is a rare set of qualities.

Robert said he would be satisfied to have 10 close disciples. He only had two or three I know of.

Therefore these dialogues will appeal more to yogis who have already practiced meditation for some time and come to a dead end. They can learn to change the focus of their meditation from whatever they did in their practices, like Zen people with the Void, or Kriya types focusing on the Third Eye phenomena,

to focus on the I Am sense and then begin to make rapid progress.

RAJIV:

Master,

I can totally relate to your feelings.

I used to feel very disturbed myself and frustrated when I noticed how shortsighted sadhakas were in Kriya. It was almost like "They did not care" attitude. It did not matter that they were getting any results or no. They would stick on nevertheless either convinced that they "knew" all with the little bliss or joy they experienced or blaming that their time has not come. NOTHING OF WHICH IS TRUE.

Now I feel even worse about the neo-advaitins. I cannot believe the stuff that goes around in the name of advaita. GOSH. I used to wonder WHY Mother Consciousness is playing like this? But Master things will change. I feel your pain. Probably consciousness has Her own agenda and with time the curtains will fall.

Let them play. Someday the true teachings will reach most sincere sadhakas and that day we all will dive deep in that ocean of boundless joy and happiness. That day I will consider my life worth living. Already it is happening Master. Is it not?

So many sincere students want to know about this. It has to happen Master. Your Love will not fail them and neither shall theirs for what lies beyond consciousness.

Your Love for sincere students will not fail Master.

EDJI:

Thank you Rajiv. I don't feel pain, just a sense of disappointment.

I feel the same way in politics in the USA. I am very liberal and want the government to help more, stop war, end the eating of animals, but the country is still very conservative, anti poor, anti animal. It is an ongoing disappointment. I feel a lack of justice. But that is how it is. The feeling would be stronger, but it is not up to me to make a change, nor could I.

My joy is in watching your attaining and change, and it is far from finished yet. Watch how you will still grow and change in understanding.

RAJIV:

Master I was speaking to a few sadhaks here who have been into kriya and advaita for many years but got no great result from the practice.

It was amusing to know that most regarded my progress as my last birth efforts and all of them were willing to believe that they will "realize" when the time is ripe. Indians have a strong belief in fate and destiny and I do not blame them as that is part of our deep-rooted conditioning. Most also believed that it is wrong to seek results.

I can empathize with their thoughts and even agree to some extent. Seeking is wrong in practice. But one must always reflect whether the teachings and practice are yielding the right results or not. Because correct practice with correct guidance HAS to lead to the required results.

Secondly I found most of them reading a lot of stuff of various past masters. All they gathered were knowledge and verbal concepts. That can in fact be detrimental to ones progress.

Practice to me meant being aware every moment of what is taking place with me, introspecting deeply and ALSO one pointed meditative effort. One without the other is totally incomplete. Both are equally important. And most important was the step-to-step practical Guidance of a physical Guru. How often can one be deluded into thinking that he or she is making good progress when it could just be the opposite. The presence of a physical teacher or Guru is therefore most essential at every step. Books or blind emotional devotion can never replace the presence and guidance of a physical teacher.

Had it not been for you Master and your blessings I could have been stuck at "oneness" state only (play of consciousness) and worse deluded into believing that this is all there is. Now I know it was just a tip of the iceberg.

Behavior and dealing with emotions and knowing that "I" is different from I-thought is one aspect. You can reach Oneness. But to know that the same "I" is not oneness and is even beyond consciousness is another aspect. That will be possible only when one practices meditation where the mind and its movements are silenced and one experiences various subtler states by diving

deep within.

Most neo advatins are happy with a little bliss and joy when they practice awareness they reach the "NOW," transcend I-thought and get a glimpse of that oneness state. But because they lack meditative effort, they are not diving deep enough to search the pearls of true joy and happiness. The amness is ever changing and fleeting and bound to give disappointment and disillusionment. The neo advatins must realize that by a little more effort they can reach that eternal happiness state where the ever-changing consciousness can have very little effect on the sadhaka's state. Nothing at the outside or the state of his beingness can affect that I-sense. He stands tall resting at the fortress of bliss build through his steady contemplation.

The Yogis are contemplative but play around at the inside through "seeking" or "reaching out." They practice hard but totally neglect the I-sense. They are all the time exploring the void or third eye phenomenon. You will never find a Yogi ordinary. They will always be fancy. They will always be someone larger than life. Most meditators belong to some lineage or the other and have their own individual concepts and conditioning which are superimposed on the chelas including what experiences one will have. When they sit for meditation they sit like Yogis of that tradition.

Also the system of completing so and so many kriyas of first, second, third, fourth, fifth, etc., in one sitting make it very mechanical and dry. They are attentive to their particular system of meditation and not to their own beingness. I saw most were obsessed with numbers and so were attentive to the means "kriya" and not the goal "Self." It was mostly about seeking and

searching for an experience or entering the star and various stuff like that.

What I am, the beingness, was lost in the midst of such desires. Most of them had behavioral issues, lots of anger and frustration in them. Few of them I knew even suffered from physical and mental ailments due to rigorous khumbhaks and intense practice, which kept them off and on from regular practice.

Master these are just few of the reasons I personally felt that kept Sadhaks away from experiencing deep oneness and joyous states. You have made the teachings so easy to understand and practice that all they need to do is honestly reflect where their practice is leading them. As you have often said abiding in self is not a verbalizing of "Who Am I" as much as practicing to remain in the I-sense through meditative methods. For those who follow that right results are not very far off.

EDJI:

Excellent analysis and summary.

Robert, Ramana and Nisargadatta all recommended the same sorts of practice, but even this has to be refined by each person, and a teacher does help eliminate blind alleys and false enlightenments.

Having a theoretical guideline is important, and having a mind honed by practice is important. The key is the correct practice, which is self-inquiry.

You have to understand too that self-inquiry means attending to the self, the sense of I Am, by observing it, probing it, backing

into it, playing with it in order to differentiate the I Am feeling from everything else. Then you abide in it, rest in it.

Sometimes just a small yet subtle change in the way self-inquiry is practiced can make a world of difference. The internal phenomena are complex, changing and variable, making it difficult to isolate and focus on the unchanging.

Then the automatic changes happen. You have samadhis and become one with the world, or consciousness. You see everything is consciousness. The body is consciousness, thoughts, etc. Then you notice the I Am and consciousness comes and goes but still you remain, and you become aware of something beyond I Am and consciousness. It is a progression.

However, it is an automatic process because the practice of self-abidance is not an external practice as is Kriya or other yogas, as the self is naturally self-conscious. It is the mind that is the perversion, breaking up the one consciousness into so many divisions, and creating internal and external worlds.

Abiding in the I Am IS the natural state, it is not a doing like yoga, reading, or psychotherapy. It is being.

RAJIV:

Master,

Strangely enough, ever since I realized that Consciousness is fleeting and not worth much thought, I am mysteriously dragged into various personal and office agendas when I am not even willing it. They could have easily upset me in the past and could have shattered a normal person but I realize all these are too trivial to even consider. It is all fine. Nothing seems to affect

the inner happiness and bliss. Let anything happen at the outside. Even though formal meditative sessions are effected because of all this but the understanding that all of consciousness and outer happening DO NOT matter at all has taken a firm grip over me.

The bliss is overwhelming sometimes but I am less involved with that. Nothing involves my attention much and nothing affects me. "Nothing is real, all of this will pass" is all that my mind and being feels all day along. It is almost like a mantra going on continuously. There is joy, there is bliss, there is peace, there is turmoil, there is noise, there are thoughts BUT there is no taker of these experiences. For the first time in my life I can say none of it belongs to me or is my doing. Ah, it is a very liberating feeling Master.

EDJI:

This is important. Try to keep up the formal meditations for a long time. You can still lose your state and have a hard time getting it back. Don't let your mind drag you back.

Those formal periods of silence are very important.

I know of your sensitivity. It is not a fault or vice. It is a great thing. You are a kind man. Not only a sage in the advaita tradition in the future, but also a saint in the classical sense. This is a wonderful and rare combination. That is why Consciousness loves you so much. It is not Consciousness that is troubling you, but your mind that still refuses to die. You have seen through it, but it still hangs on.

That is why you have to protect yourself right now, to preserve this rare combination.

Take your time on editing our dialogues. Peaceful withdrawal time is more important for you than the dialogues.

Once that is published, I will begin an exegesis of Consciousness and the Absolute by Jean Dunn about Nisargadatta. Jean was my other teacher. She was only one of two students authorized by Nisargadatta to teach, and even 15 years ago she said my understanding was good enough, whatever that meant to her at that time. In that sense, you are Nisargadatta's spiritual great grandson, as well as Ramana Maharshi's spiritual great grandson.

There will be much for you to explore in the future in terms of subtleties of Ramana's teachings.

I say all this though it is dangerous because it can awaken pride in you. Be careful.

I want to make sure you get as much as I can offer.

RAJIV:

Wow, I am already waiting for it. I did read somewhere on one of the sites what Jean said about you.

Edji without a Guru nothing can be achieved.

Thank you God for giving me my Sat Guru in your form. I will be lost without You Master.

EDJI:

You would be guided no matter if I were around or not Rajiv. Consciousness loves you. Grace arises because you became aware of your deepest source which is now pulling you from within.

RAJIV:

Master before I get engrossed in reading the dialogues I would just like to share a few things in the past few sessions of dhyaan and waking state.

When I kept myself totally aside in today's dhyaan I was watching the tremendous effort which consciousness was making, BUT there was no ME. I was allowing consciousness to do what it likes on its own. I then realized that I am NEVER in control of what happens in life or in the session too and that all that what happens is none of my concern. It is consciousness' play and it has its own intelligence working. Now that intelligence may not be according to how I perceive my session should go or life should go. I let go of every will or desire and decided to just be. I may or may not have watched the proceedings.

I remember after my session was over that it was haphazard, all over the place to start with. It made no sense, no direction but it was the way consciousness decided. I was no party to it. I was only resting letting it do what it wants. The ways of Consciousness makes no sense, no direction, and no method. It was like chaos, total chaos. I control nothing for I am very clear on my position. I have no will. It felt stupid that I didn't wish to do anything at all. I was too busy resting I thought let it do what it wants.

After the session was over I only remember that 2 hours had gone like in a minute, it is most NATURAL state to be without will. I recollect a few experiences like sinking taking place, the vast emptiness void, a deep silence, movement ahead into the void ahead inside, no idea when they appeared or disappeared or how long they lasted because the mind was off, drugged or you can say in a dull sleepy nothingness.

The sinking happened on its own. I got swallowed at a tremendous speed. A tremendous stillness and empty void was experienced beyond experience. It was like the body/mind/consciousness machine switched off after the chaos and turbulence.

They will seem to be an imposition on you. You will realize it makes no sense to fight an enemy, which doesn't exist. It is like a dark room can only give an illusion of ghosts but you know they don't exist. You don't keep the lights on fearing them or start thinking how to tackle them. The thought of them leaves on its own as you go into slumber. They die their natural death. Similarly all thought and play of consciousness have an agenda, they appear and disappear just let them be. They are just pre-recorded tapes, which keep going on and off. That consciousness has a will to make an effort and involves your body and mind but you have NONE. I discovered I was BEYOND WILL and so beyond Effort.

It is consciousness, which plays around with characters and events, and none of this is my doing. I don't create situations nor am I related to it in any way. It makes no difference what consciousness would do for it is not related to me. It only seems

like that. Consciousness has nothing personal too it just operates, as it desires with no fixed pattern.

Much of this makes no sense at all. To find sense of what consciousness does is to create a reality out of it and to disturb its workings. All this is just a fraud probably. And to involve us in any of this is to make unreal totally real. To use any will is to make unreal real? Consciousness on its own works and we have nothing to do with any of it.

We have nothing to create, nothing to seek, nothing to destroy, nothing to do with anything around. Consciousness works through the intelligence of the body and mind; we don't have to even watch it. We can perfectly sleep, do nothing and yet consciousness will work with our bodies. We are dead already in a way. The bliss is no criteria, the happiness, joy, peace itself are no criteria, yet it is there in abundance without my asking. I ask nothing. I may or may not be a source of anything. I may or may not have created all this. Having seen through this play of consciousness, I only exist without any apparent will. I am only resting. All that there is, is silence, and all that I am doing is resting. Just resting Master. I AM SIMPLY RESTING ALL THE TIME.

That resting is an experience in meditation when the entire mechanism of consciousness breaks down slows down and eventually stops. Before that they operate at full speed asking you to be party to it. And when you allow them to operate with their own intelligence using no will but just being, it stops and then there is the sweet nothingness and emptiness, the marvelous state of Natural silence.

Master what freedom you have given me is beyond all

descriptions and words. Everything fails to qualify what you have bestowed on me.

I bow,

Rajiv

EDJI:

Yes Rajiv, now you have arrived.

RAJIV:

: -)

This time Master I somehow knew.

It is an ultimate sense of freedom from everything, from thought, from consciousness, from will and from effort. There is nothing to do but rest and whatever happens is simply not my concern.

Ah Master your Grace made all this possible. Ah if only others can realize that the words of the Satguru is enough, nothing else is needed. Surrender does not mean blind faith, it means forsaking everything for His words, where nothing matters except those words.

Master I bow at your feet a million times

RAJIV: (A few days later)

Master just got out of dhyaan, again nearly 2 hours gone without "knowing" how. In fact, I couldn't hear the doorbell of my milk man too. So I was surprised how I missed the bell.

There is nothing much to write in terms of "experiences" because the only feeling I was having was that I was aware the whole session. At least that is what I felt. There was nothing more to it.

But obviously I lost consciousness and went into deep sleep because I could not hear the door bells. What is strange was the feeling that I was aware of time and every proceeding happening in dhyaan. In between I was in astral dream plane too but that was all happening on the surface and I noticed very little of them. ME as a background is ever resting.

The little that I could "experience" of that background state was brief periods of intense joy, INTENSE cold thrill happening to my entire beingness and beyond and so nothing much in terms of experience.

All in all nothing was actually happening for whatever that was happening was not happening to ME and so not much attention was taking place to the surface of experiences. The prominent experience I felt was that a feeling that I was always aware and that of a deeper joy and cold thrill taking place in my restful natural state where time too did not touch me. I remembered the experience of cold thrill too as a memory.

EDJI:

This is your true state, beyond everything. You are becoming nothing! This restful state is called waking sleep, Turiya, and will only deepen and mature my dear Rajiv. You are beginning to apprehend your true resting nature, but the process is far from complete.

RAJIV:

Believe me, the only thing I did was never to deviate from your instructions. I believe your words have tremendous transmission powers if only one surrenders fully. Without doubt that was my only plus point. Never did a doubt rise in my mind even once. I sailed through your Grace alone Master.

Master it is my only wish in life now to have your Darshan.

I do not know if you can travel to India or no. There will be no greater pleasure for me than that if you ever come visit us here.

The horse (that is me) who is thirsty for your Darshan will find a way to reach the well soon if it comes to that.

You have quenched my entire thirst and I am sure this too shall be one day soon.

Your servant,

Rajiv

(Next Day)

RAJIV:

Indescribable joy was what I experienced in today's morning dhyaan. Master nothing I write or say can actually describe it. It was like every cell of my body was EXPLODING with joy. There is no way in the world anything can contain such a joy. Every other joy, feeling, pleasure in the past that I have ever experienced FADED in comparison. EVERYTHING that a human being can ever experience or imagine or perceive IS NOTHING as compared to this.

There were periods of nothingness when everything seemed to have stopped like yesterdays dhyaan, and then this joy. I have no idea whether I am talking from memory or whether that is my real nature because there is no finger to point. There is no mind to track anything. Again there was awareness yet no idea how so much time passed away.

This time the sinking at the back was in such force that I reached astral too. I felt my physical as well as my astral body BOTH at the same time. I could remain in the two bodies absolutely together. In the subtle astral realm my mind was in full operation but the indescribable joy of causal or beyond CANNOT be tracked, pointed or traced. It was deeper for me to conclude the origin of the joy except that perhaps the timeless state yielded such a joy.

The stillness and silence during dhyaan tells me, "I am wordless and effortless, take refuge here." There is no observer or

observed, no witnesser or witnessing, no object, no mind and no time only this RESTFUL JOY which is beyond all and everything.

Ah Master there is nothing to say.

Pranoms to Guru of all who is making this happen, My Satguru Master Ed.

Rajiv

RAJIV: (Two weeks later in response to Ed's inquiry as to how he was doing.)

Master meditation is no more tedious but beautiful now. Meditation time is BEST time of my life. Twice daily meditations happen ON its own. There is nothing to do at all. I have lost describing what meditation is. There is nothing to say Master.

The resting state is gaining prominence over "happenings" or experiences. Since two days during morning meditation I sometimes get engulfed in sparkling light like a clear milky sky. It is most beautiful. But what I am is beyond all that phenomena. The sinking takes place when thoughts are caught hold off through keen observation but I am beyond all that too. I play around many times and that is why it is such a wonderful thing to meditate. When nothing takes place I simply rest. There is nothing that matters (thoughts or experiences or need of both) except that I am that restful sleepy yet aware entity. Time just passes on its own. It is silly to even want to experience anything rather just lower the gaze and rest. There are times the bliss is torrential but there are times when nothing actually happens yet the calmness, the peace of the inner sleepy

Self is ALWAYS there in spite of the mind, consciousness playing its own game at the outside. It is almost like two things taking place at the same time and I the background prominent Self has nothing to interfere with the goings outside. They subside on their own after they have done their bit of dancing around but I am always there blissful as always choosing to watch them or completely ignore them. My will is only one thing which is lower the gaze and settle there. The feelings of bliss are almost like waves settling in the ocean. No one knows how they arise and fall and I dont know or anticipate what form the waves will take.

WAKING

There is a huge change in perspective. I am moving carefree. Honestly thoughts are more since a few days ever since the autobiography was put on the internet but really I do little of what the thoughts want to engage in. Its like the understanding that nothing of this actually matters yet the mind/body engages almost like auto pilot. The intelligence does all and I have no will in that. Its all a movie show and I can choose to watch it or sleep over it. Its best that consciousness does what it wants to do through my body/mind. My natural auto pilot system is taking things seriously where as I know nothing of this has any significance. I smile most of the time these days. It is almost like the real ME is trapped within the workings of the body/mind. I try and not use my will to change the ways of body/mind and rather just take things as they are. But Sometimes I do use my will and change things. But all of this is fun because finally nothing matters yet if we can contribute positively in any way and if that requires using will to do so than why not?

I have very little to say about what and why things happens during waking state yet when I look up I have actually written a lot in words :-).

Many Pranams,
Yours,
Rajiv

MANY WEEKS LATER; THE UNFOLDING CONTINUES

RAJIV :

Master there is a feeling of utter helplessness where I feel an intense desire to close my eyes and meditate. The bhava comes as blissful surrender to the inner Self. It remains most of the day like that.

The "Nasha" (intoxication) remains all the day now. This is an effortless Samadhi: oneness with everything around me and within me. It is automatic. There is no effort and the bliss is torrential. But more than that I enjoy the state when nothing actually is taking place, where there is just this deep silence. Where I can say nothing happens to ME. That takes place when I lower my gaze and go to a restful aware sleep. This too is automatic and happens on its own. I just Rest.

EDJI:

Perfect !!!

RAJIV:

Meditations are wonderful these days. You may say I am getting to know a few intricate aspects of Mother Consciousness. She is revealing a few more things. The totality may be a fraud but consciousness is immensely intelligent and beyond any sense. Trying to understand Her is like using sense and hence a futile exercise. It is best just to remain abiding in the sleepy Self. It is surprising Master to know that how easy it can get if we just allow Her to dance around and if we don't waver from the SELF .

After sometime She stops the dancing around when She has done Her bit. She is Mother of all phenomena and tries Her best to involve you and entice you with everything. It is also ok to play around too sometimes just to get to know what She offers but it should never be forgotten that the real ME, is resting in the midst of all the activity. This is what I become when Mother stops.

RAJIV:

Master,

Before consciousness comes back, there is one kind of awareness in which nothing is felt, meaning the outside noises, the feelings, perceptions, thoughts , images, etc., nothing at all except that I am always aware, meaning I always felt I am. I have no idea however how time passed. Time becomes a non event. There is awareness as to my existence yet no awareness of time or the passage of it.

The awareness of existence takes place when intense joy is felt

like fountains of pure joy spurting all over my body yet during that time there is no memory of where I am, nor what I am. There is no memory as to where I am meditating either in room or office or which room and in which position. Once memory takes over fully and it takes a little time for it to fully return, so does the IAM ness return.

However the little gap between memory returning and no memory is the real ME. That ME is the original state which precedes consciousness (memory).

Many times in office during afternoons as I just lie down. I very often lose memory whether I am at office or at home or whether I am lying or sitting. I have no memory for just that few moments YET something made me aware that "I remain" even without the memory of whom I am or where I am. As memory takes a firm grip I become fully conscious. With memory returning there is a self-knowing mechanism which tells me that "I exist" even without that memory. The return of memory marks the return of IAM ness again.

I bow,

Rajiv

EDJI:

Yes, precisely, exactly correct.

I am is coextensive with the arising of mind. Until the mind arises, neither I Am, nor the world exist. After the mind arises, it is difficult to find and remain in what you call the "ME." Eventually, all that you will want to do is remain in the ME; all else is folly.

Six weeks later; the unfolding continues:

Master what I am writing may be a bit repetitive yet I am inspired to share few things with you.

Master firstly Meditation is simply wonderful. I never enjoyed them the way I do now. It is not a duty that many Yogis perceive meditation to be. Duty would be such a burden. It is joy, simply beautiful to meditate. It is not a daily routine because then it becomes boring. To me meditation is sheer enjoyment, a celebration. The celebration of inner silence and deep rest. The silence is not of the gap between two thoughts, or of the deep humming which pervades all or of the outer noises that stop on its own. None of this is silence. The silence is that of "no-experience". I am always there as that non-experienced silence.

Thoughts will come and go, astral visions will come and go, noises will stop and come yet I will remain as that deep silence. Can I say I actually go to sleep? Yes because the other day I realized that I do snore too :-). So I was always aware of the sleep too. I am always awake. I exist during the whole duration yet not in the way as I exist during the waking time. It is surprising that I know I am not the sleep state, I am totally awake yet everything has stopped and time just flew.

I wish not to get up from that "waking sleep" but consciousness desires something else. My bodily urges force me to get up and I am out of the state. More than any state of consciousness this state of turiya is natural state. It is not about spending those 2 hours in meditation, but it is about spending the time as what one actually is. The other 3 stages are a superimposition on that natural state.

How it makes a difference in my waking state is of immense importance too. Nothing matters as before. How can anything be any importance?

It is a different thing that I carry on with the ways of consciousness, playing around because I know all this is a gimmick. I enjoy but how can I seek when there is no memory? The memory is only of the natural state, the rest is all play. I may react anyhow to a situation, get upset or angry, shout or laugh, but nothing is carried to the next day or even into another moment. My body/mind plays to make things interesting but there is no memory of the things to be done later. It is all a situation based action-reaction. The pain, the joy, the happiness, the suffering of others, the anger and the love....all is nothing and they exist as long as memory and understanding exist. With me both memory and understanding are becoming non-existent too.

EDJI:

This is an important development. Readers should know that after a short time one attains a "steady state" so to speak, of silence. Many neo Advaitins that have not attained any state, take about "states" with derision, saying spiritual states and experiences come and go, but only understanding is constant.

However, the silent presence beyond Turiya is always there, and once apprehended, becomes a constant companion. In fact, it is understanding that comes and goes depending on the depth of one's experience, and even going beyond experience.

RAJIV:

Yes Master.

This "Steady state" is always there and now seems more real than anything else. Consciousness is treacherous and can deceive but not this permanent natural state. It remains all the time. I still love Consciousness and knowingly play to her tunes sometimes. I don't try and understand Her ways. They are weird. There is no freedom like this state which your Grace has delivered onto me.

Meditation efforts are not enough. It is the Gurus Grace too. Grace arrives when the I is gone. Everything which Rajiv represents is consciousness and hence false. Just imagine a state where nothing matters. Can meditational effort alone bring that state? I dont think so. Forgetting oneself one needs to surrender to the instructions of the personal Guru and Grace will work through the Guru. Only the Guru can take you to that place. The Guru himself will never tell this to his Shisyas. And the shishyas can fool themselves believing that effort alone can bring the state. Even if it does it will be temporary, very temporary.

Every effort is still an attempt in consciousness is it not so? So can it deliver? Most students feel they will read few things here and few things there, follow this and that, make the effort and get there. The student needs to be at the Lotus feet of His Guru. Complete Surrender. That is first requirement. Effort is definitely required. Sometimes tremendous but the first requirement of surrender will help the shisya sail through it effortlessly.

Many Pranams,
Rajiv

Two weeks later; the unfolding continues:

RAJIV:

The state of Turiya is complete state of blissful consciousness. The 3 states of waking, dream and deep sleep are actual components of the turiya itself. These 3 states rise and fall on the turiya state. What we call oneness in waking and spurts of joy during deep sleep are the nature of turiya avasta. So in reality whatever we perceive is turiya alone. What is perceivable is turiya alone and in that sense only the turiya exists.

However the period where nothing is perceived is beyond turiya. This timeless non experience state suggests that it is turiya itself which arises and falls hence the real ME is that absolute silence where turiya itself appears and disappears.

Many Pranams,
Rajiv

EDJI:

Very good summary. Nisargadatta could not have said it better.

Although that which is beyond, is conceptual, you can "feel" it as complete nothingness, always there. I don't mean "feel" like with the senses, but more as contained in the term "apprehend." It is not knowledge, such as in consciousness, I Am, I, but "feel" it as the substratum out of which awareness arises.

The sense of it causes me great awe all the time. The immensity.

RAJIV:

Beautiful Master. To "Apprehend" would be a near perfect word Master. Yes to hold on to that state which no mind can comprehend. This is meaning of true devotion and faith. The mind can't comprehend yet we can apprehend.

APPENDIX I

HUNTING THE I

Successful Self-Inquiry

Ed Muzika

“Correct practice” of self-inquiry is so important that I feel a need to articulate its many different ways, because the “successful” methods are subtle indeed. One can practice unsuccessful self-inquiry for a long time because you have no idea of what you are looking for. Therefore, I will explain the various methods in a slightly different ways hoping that one way or another will connect with those truly interested in practice.

Some people are able to feel a sense of I Am almost immediately upon introspection and others not. One is by nature naturally introspective or not. To do self-inquiry, one either has the talent or learns it by practice. The same holds true for psychotherapy. Those who are able to look within and “see” internal, imaginal objects will do well in talk therapy, while those who lack this skill, will not. However, one can learn this skill through repeated efforts to “look within” the imaginal spaces of the mind.

The problem is, a lot of people do not experience an ‘I am’ feeling or sensation and therefore have nothing to work with. They look “inside themselves” and find only darkness, or they find a myriad of phenomena, such as inner light displays, thoughts, images, memories, body sensations, arising energies, etc., and don’t have a clue as to which is the ‘I Am’ that is to be

concentrated on. They are lost in a forest of sensations and perceptions and have no sense of I or 'I am'.

If this is the case, Robert offered the method of asking, "Who am I?" or "To whom do these thoughts and objects occur?" This method CAN eventually lead you to the witness, but the weakness is that this method is totally on the level of the mind and thinking, and one has to go beyond the mind.

The other weakness of the "Who am I?" method is that after you learn how to find and witness a thought—any thought, including the I-thought—watching where it comes and goes from, leads to the Void. All thoughts come and go from the Void. Thus looking into the Void as the source, one attempts to become the void or continues to peer into the void looking for a source, when in fact, what you are really trying to do is locate the seeker, or subject, and become the seeker at rest. The subject, I, the looker, is not the Void.

Thus self-inquiry has two steps: Take a look at all phenomena available to you, both inside phenomena such as thoughts and images, and outside phenomena, such as objects in the world, both while meditating and throughout the day; observe them and "play" with the phenomena. Get familiar with and explore the inner world to an extent. Then ask yourself, "Is that phenomena me, or am I apart from it?"

What we are attempting to do is find the anomaly, that which does not change, and is different from all other sensations in the sense that it is not an observed phenomena, but is in fact the observer, witness, or "looker" itself. It is the singularity around which all the objects and world are arranged.

There are many phenomena that appear to be 'I Am' to the inquirer at various times, such as the I thought, or ego, and such as the great Void which is experienced when you are close to

awakening. Many people also find several subjects, or “watchers.” One watches thoughts as a witness, and then one becomes aware that they are watching thoughts. That is, there are two orders of witnesses.

Mostly when people first think they experience the ‘I am’ sensation, they are really observing the energy knot that connects the body to the mind. They are not yet aware that they are apart from this phenomena, and are observing it, and that this observer is the real I. The observer or looker, or witness is so close to oneself that we often overlook it, as the Advaitic parable of the Tenth Indian points out. Often the observer is not counted because it is not an object and is taken for granted and not found.

All these false Is have to be witnessed, explored and played with, and discovered not to be the true I. But the ‘I Am’ sensation Maharaj talks about is the ego knot connecting the body with consciousness. This knot is not you, but you have to discover that for yourself as a direct experience and not merely as a learning from others. Once this knot is severed, everything else is plain and clear, and it is severed through continuous observation, and one discovers that that knot is being observed by the imperishable Me. One day you awaken, and that day you find the knot is not there! What a discovery! At that point you identify with the totality of consciousness, with the totality of I Am. This is the first awakening, but certainly not the most important.

Self-inquiry is a continuous, full-time job, not restricted to formal meditation periods. Formal meditation, practiced often, is a big help as it builds introspective power. Of course, too much meditation makes the mind sluggish and stupid, which is an error.

Formal meditation period ought to be at least two periods a day, with two 25-35 minute sessions, separated by a five minute rest. This can be gradually increased for those who have the time to three or four sessions, of three 25-35 minute periods.

However, the beneficial effects of building introspective power during meditation will be dissipated if the rest of the day is spent devoted to serving the world. Once one has isolated what they think to be their 'I Am', the student needs to stop several times during the day for a few minutes, and look at that 'I am' to better understand it during everyday life. The self-awareness should become continuous.

One will discover the 'I am' changes over time, because the real I is not being seen; it is only an object posing as the I.

Then one day one discovers the anomaly, that which never changes, which is the subject of all the myriads of the objects. Once that is clearly seen, all objects lose importance, and the seeker's "job" is to stay in, or abide in that observer, that subject, that witness, from whom all the objects of the world arise. This is a resting state. Trying to stay in that center is not really an effort. What happens is the restless mind which we identify with needs to be active, and because of that identification with the mind, "we" get active. However, the real I is always resting, and by continuously bringing the mind's attention to the looker or witness, it loses interest in going elsewhere due to the deep peace felt in the resting state.

Once the witness is discovered, one has a broad road to follow to self-realization. The false I's fall away or are dissipated. Then one's full time job is to stay in that I, abide there, and infinite peace and happiness will fall, which will draw you effortlessly into itself all the way.

How this is to be done is explained below.

Before we go into more detail about the process, we need to be clear that we can and should perform the same analysis with respect to objects in the external world. Choose an object, such as a person, a tree, a pet sitting by a window. Observe it and at the same time look into oneself for the sense of 'I Am' and see if one feels a connection between the I am and that object. If the object is emotionally charged, such as a loved one, there will often be felt a connection between that person and the heart. When one discovers that heart source, one can deliberately try sinking into it. This will cause an immediate increase in happiness and centeredness that will help formal meditation and lead more quickly to freedom. Then one needs to observe whether that heart source is the witness or not.

Hopefully this overview explains the whole process, and now the process will be explained in more detail.

First, the best descriptions of self-inquiry found elsewhere are in two books: *The Path of Sri Ramana, Part 1* by Sadhu Om and Michael James, chapters seven and eight, and the *Nisargadatta Gita* by Pradeep Apte. The latter is a compilation by Apte of about 230 paragraphs Nisargadatta uttered about the I Am sense and self-abidance. The *Path of Sri Ramana* description is more like what Robert Adams taught.

The way of self-discovery taught by Robert, Ramana and Nisargadatta is to abide in the I Am, but what does this mean? What is the I Am? How do I abide in it? How do I practice self-inquiry?

Further discussion of the practice of self-remembering, or self-abidance can be found in James' book, "Happiness and the Art of Being," especially the latter chapters.

One other book I sometimes recommend for those who do not experience a sense of I Am, the sense of existence or presence, is

that by Michael Langford, “The most rapid and Direct Means to Eternal Bliss.”

Michael writes that he practiced various self-concepts of self-inquiry for 27 years with poor results. He was no more self-realized than when he started.

I want his experience make one thing clear, self-inquiry is complex because there are so many inner experiences and finding the subject, which then is rested in, can be quite difficult. It certainly is not a simplistic tool like using the “Who Am I?” question over and over again. Michael assiduously practiced self inquiry for 27 years, read all the books, visited all the teachers, yet had not gotten anywhere. I can say the same about myself for over 20 years.

Nor is awakening merely finding out that there is no ego, and no object that the I thought refers to. These are still initial awakening experiences.

Michael never was able to latch onto a feeling ‘I Am’. He described a method and concept that being aware of awareness itself is abiding in the I Am; the method he discovered, or I should say he rediscovered, appears to be a Soto Zen meditation called Shikantaza. He may deny his method is Shikantaza because he believes he discovered awareness watching awareness method of self-inquiry, but his method is no more or less than Shikantaza, sitting in silence, doing nothing except being aware. This is not easy. It takes a while. The mind has to settle and become quiet. Often years have to pass before this quiet sitting is possible, because beginners invariably expect immediate results. If they don't get them, they often give up or go to the next teacher or technique. Beginners don't like quiet, they want action.

However, as Robert often said, "Persistence is everything."

One other main self-inquiry method is to tease out the real 'I Am' feeling and abide there. This is generally not easy either depending on many factors. Personally, I think this is the best way and I will discuss it some more.

If one practices Shikantaza first, and attains many, many samadhis over a long period, one gradually finds release. However, the practice must continue because the I Am has not been killed. The I Am still resides as a remnant of the personal you. The samadhi becomes like special walled off states, and one wonders which is the real, the samadhi states of oneness, or the waking/dream self that one always returns to. They are walled off in the sense that no matter how many samadhis one experiences, the same sense of human, body-bound beingness always returns afterwards.

The fastest way to kill the you, the I Am, is the abiding in the I Am as taught by Ramana and Nisargadatta. When this is done, the I dies forever; with Shikantaza there is a too early identification with the totality of consciousness and the Void, rather than cutting the knot, which is the energy nexus between the mind and body, and between that nexus and deeper levels of being, such as the causal body experiences of true nothingness.

If release is found by the first method (Shikantaza/Langford), for it to become a permanent release, the I Am must be found again and followed. This is extremely difficult if one has dwelt in emptiness for years. It is hard then to find a self-sense for one has usually identified with emptiness through repeated Shikantaza meditations.

Many people have written to me they were unable to find a personal sense of I even after years of thinking and meditation. Many have dwelled in emptiness for years and begin to feel angry because they have found no happiness or release. They have skipped the destruction of the I Am process/complex which

means it is still alive but unfelt, covered by the focus on emptiness. They have become lost in emptiness and attained nothing.

You cannot skip steps. It is best to start with the following the I Am and complete that task. Then abiding in the emptiness of the divine witness, the absolute, is effortless and permanent.

I once saw a book entitled “Hunting the I.” This to me is a perfect description of the self-inquiry process, hunting around in the internal phenomena that comprise our inner world, identifying the I, then latching onto that first-person sense.

This becomes complex because there is the 'I word' or 'I thought,' which is the central lynch pin of the network of thoughts and images we take to be the real world. This I-thought is not the same as the sense of one's personal existence, the 'I Am' sense which is much like a tactile sense associated with the body, and mostly centered around the heart, or sitting like some emptiness existing behind the body, or above the body.

Naturally to be aware of this already requires a good working ability to internalize and introspect subjective phenomena. This means either one has an innate ability, or one acquires this discrimination through years of practice.

I, being kind of dense, required years of practice. I was always introspective in a sense, easily lost in an inner world of thoughts and emotions, but that inner world was never open and spacious. I learned to open that inner, dark, subjectivity through opening the Third Eye by becoming aware of a light between the eyebrows and ever expanding that light downwards into the earth and then upwards and outwards, revealing an imaginal space filled with light, the so-called light of consciousness. But the problem was I spent years there in that lighted void space,

thinking it was reality, not recognizing I was still separate and witnessing the void. I was far beyond the void, but was caught in ignorance. I was waiting to find the absolute sense of subjectivity by continuing to look into the Void.

During years of self-investigation, one will find legions of internal experiences which one might misidentify as I Am. Practice and persistence, as well as limiting oneself to reading just a very few books and listening to the guidance of a teacher is the best and fastest way out of this internal jungle.

Is practice necessary for self-realization? Definitely; yes, most definitely.

This is where the concept of hunting the I becomes a workable method.

One looks within to find the I Am. Every few days, weeks or months one discovers something new that they believe might be the “true” I Am: the subject.

Sometimes it is the self-luminous light of consciousness, sometimes illuminated space-like internal emptiness, sometimes it will be a feeling wholly based on the body sense. Some will feel that the sense of I Am as a sensation in the heart area of the self-perception of the feeling of the body. Others believe that they are aware of the body as an internal visual sense which is really an object in imaginal space and thus unreal. They will discover the inner sense of infinite (or non-infinite, limited) inner space and think they are that. They are not that.

One keeps exploring with the mistaken idea that at some point the I will be found, without realizing it is the I that is looking. The subject is not to be found, because the subject can never become an object. What one discovers is that all that one sees, experiences and knows is really an object experienced or known by the subject, which cannot be found.

This search can go on fruitlessly for years, for the self is not a thing, object, state, energy or anything that can be found or experienced. You may already understand this.

What to do?

At this point you must become aware that there is something that is aware of the self-inquiry processes. That “something” is the Self or the ultimate observer.

Then the “new” practice becomes looking at the looker, not at some body sensation or false I in imaginal space. You are already aware of the looker, but not that the looker is the true you. You have been caught in the misunderstanding that the looker may find the true self, when in fact, the looker is the true self. The looking "for" is the problem; the looker is already complete and at rest.

Therefore, join the looker.

So there are two steps: locate the looker, as the subject of sensations, and try to play with it to observe all its manifestations, then to rest in the looker, relax and let the looker look, and become the looker only.

When this is understood you have a clear way to abide in the self: just look towards the apparently internal sense of looking, not for a nexus, or an emptiness, or a heart sensation or any other sensation or experience. These are preliminary practices and steps before you discover the Looker. Then after discovery, sink into the looker, the subject and become the subject.

This sounds simple, but in fact the inner world is so filled with thoughts, objects, states, experiences, voids, emptiness, energies, and beingnesses, that clearly locating the "looker" is not all that easy. Just read the [Autobiography of a Jnani](#), and

you can see how intricate the internal experiences are, and how difficult it is to find the fundamental state.

You need to understand that what you will find is all that you had considered yourself to be, is not you, the looker, but objects, processes, thoughts and energies that you had previously taken as being you.

In a way, initially the looker often feels like just another sensation, another internal object; but it is not a physical sensation as is awareness of a body sensation or awareness of a thought.

The practice is to turn inwards towards the source, the looker, and look for it.

The process of locating phenomena, examining them and playing with them until you know them fully, and then eliminating them as the looker can be longer or shorter. This is the true self-inquiry process, not the one often referred to as mindlessly repeating, "Who am I?"

I have no idea of what you will experience; it appears different with different people.

But ultimately you will understand (see, experience, apprehend, discover, know) that there is no looking inside or outside. There is just one consciousness. The intentional effort of looking within was to counterbalance a lifelong habit of looking outwards and to develop introspective discrimination to eliminate internal and external objects and phenomena as the true you.

I want to emphasize that the phrase "look inward" is a lie. There is no inward--or outward. This distinction only lasts while you think you are a body. The phrase "look inwards" almost sounds

like a command to look into the inner emptiness of imagination, as inside the body. It is a bad instruction. It reinforces the idea of the reality of inner and outer, inside the skin and outside.

The world, your inner state, your searching, your imagination about what self-realization is like, will all disappear and you will understand that everything you have experienced until that moment is imagination. You will be free of all concept and imagination. In this you must abide for a long while, but self-abidance itself does not become continuous for a long time. It is a matter of persistence alone, and that only arises after a sustaining passion for truth becomes the most important issue to you.

Then, at some point, “everything” will disappear as unreal and you will be left in silent mind existence. It is hard to explain this, but this does not disappear as if you floated in endless aware space, but rather the world will cease to exist as an apparent object. The I will disappear as an apparent subject too. There will only be oneness with no separate observer of the world or self.

Later even that will disappear as one realizes there has been witnessing even of this whole process in the background. There is this thingless "thing" that has cognized this entire process, has cognized the body, personal self, the world, the waking state, the dream state, and also the process of understanding.

Regarding this “state” one can say nothing because no attributes exist, and to state attributes or what it is like will lead you astray from the real practice. This is not a state; it is that which observes all the states.

Now, this is one way of explaining the awakening process. Michael Langford articulated his way, and both Robert and Ramana articulated their methods. Notice that Robert, Ramana

and Nisargadatta rarely talked about the “experience” of finality, only the method and Advaita philosophy that entirely obscures the goal by adding a conceptual impediment.

Ditto Langford and every other teacher. They provided only distracting phenomenology and philosophy, artificial stories to lead you to their articulation of a method and your practicing it.

I do not want to lead you too far astray, but all these methods are what I called before, “massaging the ego,” and themselves have nothing to do with the finality, yet to apparently practice is a must for all, even for those who claim no method or practice is possible or needed. It is needed to increase discrimination.

I do want to repeat that repeated bringing attention to the I Am, to the apparent subject, is a doing only as long as the I Am is taken as an object of meditation, such as when focusing on the ego knot connecting body and mind which most people take as the ‘I Am’. However, the real subject, the I, is not an object. It is YOU, the observer, beyond all phenomena and the world, and is a state of not doing anything, just watching. It is the resting state of being. The apparent doing of bringing the mind to bear on the I, really is a supplication of grace, for the I will take over and end the seeker’s seeking. The I is the zero point of no movement and eternal rest. The apparent activity involved in abiding in that I, is really a resting, not a doing. It is discovering your nondoing, resting self.

Abiding in the I am, is really a practice in doing nothing, but it is successful only if you are truly aware of the real I, the witness, the looker, and you can only be sure after a long and intensive practice of investigating the mind. Without that learned discrimination, you can be surrendering to yet another object posing as the I, such as the ego. Therefore, beware of those who say no practice is necessary. It is not necessary or

even possible for one who has discovered the true I, the resting state, but doing nothing in terms of practice before becoming aware of what that zero point is, is useless and foolish.

MY OWN METHOD: DOING NOTHING

Robert taught the "Who am I?" self-inquiry process only because SOME people felt they needed a method or way to occupy their mind. All methods, Robert taught, lead to silence. Deep silence, the "deepest" is not only where the absolute is revealed, but also is the absolute.

All of the above "methods" were those I practiced for years with no real change. They resulted in all kinds of experiences and new understandings, but there was no release or death of the I-ness. Only many little deaths.

This leads me to an observation. Most practitioners are too much wrapped up in their experiences and explaining them, rather than persisting in going inward. It is as if they can't take the boredom of self-inquiry, and turn it into an intellectual discussion with the guru or teacher. They want their old "reality" of pseudo human contact with the guru, while the guru is only interested in taking them beyond anything they ever experienced or imagined.

This is time wasted, especially the time spent that so many people seem to, to understand an experience they had ten or twenty years ago. It is as if they think they can get that experience back, that is the end of their seeking, bringing them to rest.

Any experience that is not repeatable and frequent is worthless.

When I met Robert I just surrendered to him after about year two. I knew deeply that any method I practiced was only in the

mind and could not destroy the personal I-ness. I was just massaging the ego--the mixture of imaginal "gases" I call the imaginal space or world. The surrender is an approach to the resting state. "I give up; not mine Lord, but Thine."

But, even this trust and surrender had not led to release by the time Robert left Los Angeles. When Robert left for Sedona I felt completely alone, abandoned.

However, the process of getting Robert packed and moved was quite chaotic and nerve racking, so much that I started just relaxing and listening to Eastern sacred music, especially that of Muktananda and Yogananda to escape the tension and because I didn't know what else to do. This movement was forced on me, I could do no other.

I would just lay on a couch for hour after hour, day after day, week after week, listening to and being carried away by the music, thoroughly enjoying the unfolding show of consciousness within, the forms, the thoughts, the inner and out sensations. My body relaxed most of its tension. I felt I was sinking into myself. I did almost nothing except eat and do some walking. I began to feel blissfully happy. I was becoming totally nothing, but not in the Zen way of the Void, but in the personal way of being carried away by the bliss and happiness of chanting. I was relaxing into beingness, pulled inside by the happiness of doing nothing except being with all internal and external phenomena.

Then one day, an awakening happened in the form of the shower experience I describe elsewhere on this site and call [the first awakening](#).²

² This is the same awakening that the some teachers talk about, seeing that there is no ego entity, leading to seeing

I can hardly recommend this to anyone else. I loved sacred music and chanting. I also loved dwelling in emptiness and silence when listening to the chanting. Therefore, few would benefit, were they not also so also disposed. They would just get restless.

One similar method that might work better for you would be to take all of Robert's recorded talks, put them on an MP3 player, an iPod, an external speaker system, or an MP3 or iPod playing clock radio, and just listen to them. Just listen to the talks whenever you have any time. Have sacred music in the background.

All of Robert's talks are always directed towards getting you to enter silence. His talks will repeatedly bring you to silence. The music will/could cause bliss. Both together allow complete relaxation, a melting of the sense of self--individuality--into a complete sense of happiness. You might say this is the easy way, but only if you are ready for it. Years of intense practice are usually a prerequisite, because one is used to using the mind to discover or create anything. When the mind is clearly seen as something that will not work to complete the task of awakening, there is a profound relaxation and sinking into deeper level of self, as Rajiv talks about in [Autobiography of a Jnani](#).

By the way, the alarm on some clock radios can be set to pick a specific talk by Robert or a random one. You might want to be awakened by his instructions on how to practice self inquiry.

that there is only one consciousness. There no longer is an I and an external world. There is no inner and outer. There is only one consciousness, and the world as we had known it disappears and is seen to be concept only. This is not the final awakening.

If you read the biographies or autobiographies of the great teachers, each will describe a different process and may actually recommend processes which were different from their own because they see the idiosyncrasy of their own processes, and like me, see that the way I did it would not work for all.

Probably one "method" closest to my "spontaneous method," I describe as "falling backwards into the self."

Lots of people identify the "feeling" of self, or "I Am," as the feeling of the totality of the body. Actually, it is not, but it feels that way initially to many.

The method is to feel that sense of self as initially manifest as the body sense, and then imagine or feel yourself falling backwards into it. Falling backwards by relaxing more and more into the comfort of those apparent body sensations. It is quite blissful and settling.

Sometimes, there is a sense of a dark presence behind oneself, which is identified as one's resting state. If you feel that strongly, imaginatively relax and fall backwards into that dark emptiness. The relaxation is the same.

Almost all of these methods will produce useless experiences and understanding that will go away but which might seem world shaking at the time. So, don't stop. Keep going.

I want to be quite clear: None of these methods will produce awakening/enlightenment/self-realization or whatever you want to call this state that you presently do not know yourself. All methods are on the level of mind.

Long practice of a method does not produce awakening, but, you might say, allows it to happen. I think that Nisargadatta said it best when he said someday the I Am lets you go.

However, all in all, I would first recommend people download the Nisargadatta Gita, print it out, put it in a 3 ring binder and "practice" by reading a few paragraphs every morning. Then reflect on those words, then meditate on the sense of I Am awakened, if it is awakened at all. This is a most excellent meditation manual, a wide road to release.



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Edward Muzika, affectionately known by Rajiv as Edji, was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, where he attended Case Western Reserve University, attaining a BA in philosophy, and Masters in Public Management. He moved to Detroit entering a doctoral program in Economics at Wayne State University.

At this point he clearly saw the futility and emptiness of all academic and scientific investigations using the mind, and began a search for the real, truth, knowing even then inquiry into the self is the only way, and visited his first teacher, Roshi Phillip Kapleau.

To make a long story short, he traveled to Los Angeles and studied under several Zen masters including Sasaki Roshi, Seung Sahn Soen Sa, Maezumi Roshi and Thich Tien An for several years throughout the 1970s and was ordained as a Zen monk in 1972 by Dr. Thich Tien An and Seung Sahn.

He taught Zen at five University of California Extensions as well as at the College of Buddhist Studies until the early 1980s. For 20 years he practiced meditation daily and led retreats as well as teaching Zen.

However, frustrated at not having found that for which he was seeking, which he thought was absolute knowledge, he left spiritual inquiry to become a psychologist, and received a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Sierra University in Costa Mesa, becoming a psychological assistant in 1986. He has been practicing psychology, performing evaluations, administering and interpreting testing, and writing and editing medical reports ever since.

In 1988 he met Ramesh Balsekar in Los Angeles and once again shifted back into spirituality, where soon thereafter, he met his true teachers, Robert Adams, also in Los Angeles, and Jean Dunn who often visited the Los Angeles area. The story of Robert and Ed's eight year relationship can be found on Ed's website:

<http://itisnotreal.com> and his blog:
<http://itisnotreal.blogspot.com>

It was through Robert and Jean that Ed found that which he had been seeking: complete peace, happiness and understanding who he was—Nothing!

Ed now lives in the San Fernando Valley, a few miles from where Robert lived.