

It Is Not Real - Jean Dunn & Nisargadatta Maharaj
From a Collection of Works by [Edward Muzika](#)



Jean Dunn & Nisargadatta Maharaj



Nisargadatta Maharaj - Photo given to me by Jean Dunn



The book [Self-Knowledge and Self-Realization](#), edited by Jean Dunn, is the only known book written by Maharaj himself. It was published in 1963 as noted in the editor's notes to the book. Only 100 copies were printed and Jean gave me one of these original copies, though this book can now be readily found on the Internet as well as on this [site](#).

Jean Dunn was a chain smoker as was Maharaj and suffered from emphysema as a result. She used to have a friend in Los Angeles, and when in town, she would call and we would meet. She would mostly talk about problems she was having, which was disconcerting as I wanted to talk about mine. However, she did tell me many stories about Maharaj and the games

he played with her. Her world revolved around him as befits a true Bhakta. At times he would go out of his way to ignore her by sitting where she wouldn't be able to see him or turning his back on her, or any number of other jerky things that gurus do. In about 1993, when she flew to Los Angeles to see her friend and me, the partially pressurized airplane trip nearly killed her.

When I last saw her, she knew her days were numbered (but not nearly as numbered as she thought then) and gave me a copy of Maharaj's only [book](#), as well as the photograph above.

She was told by her doctors that she should never fly again. Though that was the last time I saw her, we remained in touch until she died. In the end, her son moved in with her and took good care of her; she deserved his good care as she was a rare lady who also gave us the best book of Maharaj's teachings.

Although many of Nisargadatta's students transcribed and edited his talks and a few wrote books about his satsang, none are better than Jean Dunn's three. My favorite, and the one I think most powerful, is [Prior to Consciousness](#).

Jean was always extremely supportive and worked hard to lessen my self-doubt, which was difficult, as Robert was working equally hard to increase it. It's a Guru-thing, see my memories of Robert [HERE](#).

Relevant to understanding Maharaj, I have included [HERE](#) an email sent to me by my long time friend Swami Shankarananda who met Nisargadatta in the 1970s. Shankarananda's narration clearly reveals Maharaj's bhaktic side, which is missing in almost all books about him.



Nisargadatta's Story *by Jean Dunn*

Nisargadatta Maharaj was from the spiritual lineage of the Navanathas.

He was born in Bombay in 1897, and was brought up on a farm in Kandalgaon, a village south of Bombay. He had an alert, inquisitive mind, and was deeply interested in religious and philosophical matters. After the death of his father, he moved to Bombay in 1918, and in 1924 married Sumatibai, who bore him a son and three daughters.

Although he started life in Bombay as an office clerk, he soon went out on his own and started a small business, and in a few years he owned several small shops. A hunger for truth grew in him, and in 1933, due to a friend's urging, he approached the great Saint, Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj, and was initiated by him.

After the death of his Guru in 1936, the urge for Self-realization reached its zenith, and in 1937 he abandoned his family and businesses and took to the life of a wandering monk. On his way to the Himalayas, where he intended to spend the rest of his life, he met a brother disciple who convinced him that a life of dispassion in action would be more spiritually fruitful.

Returning to Bombay, he found only one small shop remaining of his business ventures. For the sake of his family he conducted the business but devoted all his energy to spiritual sadhana. He built himself a mezzanine floor as a place for meditation (this is the room where we all used to gather to listen to him talk).

In his own words, "When I met my Guru, he told me, 'You are not what you take yourself to be. Find out what you are. Watch the sense I AM, find your real Self...' I did as he told me. All my spare time I would spend looking at myself in silence...and what a difference it made, and how soon! It took me only three years to realize my true nature." His message to us was simple and direct with no propounding of scriptures or doctrines. "You are the Self here and now! Stop imagining yourself to be something else. Let go your attachment to the unreal."

From 1978 to 1981, when Sri Maharaj died from cancer of the throat, his talks were so much deeper than in the previous years that, with the help of a few other devotees, the tape recordings were again resumed and I transcribed and edited them, with the blessings of Sri Maharaj, and these were published under the titles of [Seeds of Consciousness](#) and [Prior to Consciousness](#); both titles were suggested by Sri Maharaj.

Jean Dunn
