



Questions and Answers

2005 to 2007

The below were questions and answers from some years ago. They are mostly directed to the problems of beginners and have been provided as some may find them of help. There are 122 pages here. Please note these are taken directly from the original ItIsNotReal.com website and have not been edited.

Current and more advanced Q&A can be found on the blog associated with this website: www.itisnotreal.blogspot.com and also are documented and provided on this [Resources](#) page.

At the end of Satsang, Robert opened a question and answer session which he called, "Stump the Guru.". He would start off by asking, "Does anyone have a stupid question?" Naturally, a lot of stupid questions were asked and answered. Sometimes though, there were questions about how to practice, how to practice self-inquiry, or how to work with some major problem in an attendee's life. Many of these Q&A sessions appear in the transcripts elsewhere on this site.

One frequently asked question was how his teachings compared with those of So and So, or as Rajneesh would say, "Etceterananda." Regarding this, Robert usually said nothing. Once in a while he say, "Not really," or, "It is only appearance (that they were similar or different). He wanted to have his teachings stand alone and have the student respond to him only without reference to a third person, which essentially would start a philosophical discussion.

He wanted to eliminate intellectualizations which might satisfy the mind for the moment, but eventually would result in ten times more questions about comparative philosophy.

Consider this an online Stump the Ed. I will try to answer any questions to the best of my ability. Of course, I am not Robert, so these are my answers.

My own personal view is that many times self inquiry in the form of asking, "Who am I," is not beneficial. Sometimes it is the wrong practice at the wrong time. As I said about Seung Sahn Soen Sa, there is no 38 regular method or style that fits all the people all the time. True self-inquiry is difficult-very difficult, and premature for most aspirants.

Then again, most people on a spiritual path are not interested in enlightenment, but rather in how to make their lives better or better deal with pain and sorrow. Their interests must be served as much as those who seek enlightenment. Yet, to a degree, what aids attaining one goal also helps the other.

From my viewpoint, the beginning of spirituality is learning internalization, abiding in consciousness rather than in "external" objects of consciousness, or even more importantly, in thoughts. This is only the beginning. Now you have to abide there for a long time and the inquiry grows more subtle.

Inquiry can mean merely abiding in the inner light of consciousness, doing nothing. Inquiry can be more active, such as Robert's instruction to seal for the source of the I-thought--that is, where does the thought 'I' come from and go away to.

Personally I think this is a waste of time, because it gives the inquirer a false sense that the I comes from some space, some center or some point in consciousness. This gives consciousness a form--space.

Rather than look for the source of the I-thought in the inner 'IMAGINARY' space--for that space is the stuff of imagination as is consciousness itself--look into the felt sense of I, that which gives I a sense of existence. I am alive. Where is this sense of aliveness? The is what Nisargadatta urged, look into beingness, I-Amness. This has no space. It cannot be located because space is in it.

Anyway, ask away.

Feel free to email stupid questions or smart questions to [me](#).

The questions will be edited and disguised so no one will know who asked, unless the questioner wants to be known.

August 16, 2005

Hello Edward,

I have been reading your web page, "It Is Not Real", with an intense fascination now for several days. What I am drawn to are your recollections of Robert Adams. I have read his book, "Silence of the Heart" several times, and the past few months, I have been carrying this book up to bed, then back down the stairs in the morning, then I open it and read it throughout my day. I carry it around like it's my teddy bear, or security blanket. It has certainly been like an anchor to my sanity, or peace, or whatever fleeting moments I can grasp in the midst of this intense activity I have embarked upon.

At the age of 45, I thought this body could pull off this big activity again, but actually, it's the mind I am watching with a constant attention as it goes from the observation of the "I" and back to the business of attending to a construction project.

I was amazed as I read your description of your moment while taking a shower when the "I" was totally revealed to not exist whatsoever. I have been running this search for the "I" over and over again. It is to me a desperate activity that has resulted in only fleeting moments of passive relief. Edward, is this personal inquiry, this search for the "I", truly the most effective thing I can do??

If I knew this was going to create so much difficulty and suffering, I certainly never would have embarked upon such an adventure. But I know what Robert Adams would say... "To whom do these difficulties come?" Then I would answer... "They come to me." Then... "Who is this me??" "Who is this "I"? This inquiry seems to derail the intensity of the immediate thoughts, but then within seconds, my brain can slip back into the same track and then the thoughts and fears and doubts arise again. Edward, is this all I can do? This has been a very turbulent and worrisome time for me of late. I feel like the universe is really revving up and devouring me! "

I feel a bit like that moment you described when Robert was staring at you and he said... "I am cooking you." That's how I feel lately, like the universe is

cooking me. The heat is on really high now and the suffering has been more intense unlike any time I have ever encountered.

Tom

August 18, 2005

Hi Tom,

I hear deeply your turmoil. You already know the source. As Robert would say, your mind is not your friend. Other sages say mind is your enemy. I say mind is a good thing to waste.

You ask whether there is anything else you can do beside self inquiry via “Who Am I?”

Mind is added onto you. Mind is thinking. It has no power if you get prior to mind, such as when you can consciously sink inward into your body. You are not your body, but sinking into your apparent body will get you away from the surface turmoil and thinking that seems like it engulfs your head.

If you can sit motionless for a few minutes, sink your mind backwards into your abdominal area. In Zen, this is called the Hara. If you can sink back into the Hara, and are making some progress, at a point you will feel like you are becoming completely stupid. Your mind will be hard and dense like a brick. All of the thinking and worry will congeal into a dense mass and no thinking will come out.

At some point, depending on your intensity and perseverance of practice, suddenly, without warning, something wonderful could happen and your mind will wash away. I can't tell you more or your mind will try figure out what I mean and try to make it happen; unfortunately, that will keep the mind in charge. You don't want that. As it is, this effort will be a mind-directed, but allows you an enter into the experience of the inner vastness.

I will be blunt. This kind of crisis will happen over and over until you can find a way of going within. It is not an easy or short a process. There are many ways inward. This is a short cut just for you because of where you are in turmoil. When life calms down, then you can practice “Who am I or whatever” more productively. Consider sinking into the gut as a medicine for your ailment.

The "Who am I" question is another method for turning the attention inward. A highly recommended method. My feeling though is that the method I described is more effective for where you are. Who am I is fraught with the danger of intellectualism. There are other dangers associated with too much effort in self-inquiry, because effort takes you away from a relaxed state where apprehending your true nature is possible. Sinking into your belly is a far less dangerous way to go within when you first try to go within.

As Robert would say, "What is the worse that could happen?" Well, I could lose the house. "So, what is so bad about that?" I could lose all my money and have no security. "So, what is so bad about that?" I could be thrown out onto the street living out of trash cans. "So, what is so bad about that?" I could die. "So, what is so bad about that?"

Perspective.

Take good care of yourself and all living things,

Ed

August 18, 2005

Hello Edward.

I want to thank you for your contributions and suggestions regarding my well-being. A most potent thing you said. "Mind is added onto you. You are before mind." This is so entirely true, and becoming more and more obvious, that for today, I will remember that and this will allow my thoughts to quiet. You know Edward, all of this commotion is passing by lately with such ferocity that I am see-sawing up and down within moments of panic... and then a deeper peace than I've every imagined. Your suggestion to drop into the abdomen, just bury into myself like in a fetal position... that actually takes more effort than to simply observe the thoughts and wait for the latest wave of panic to roll out! So... I am just going to have to stick with the words of the wisest teacher I've ever encountered, Robert Adams.

On page 38 are these words... " "Because you think the personal I exists, you have to use Self-inquiry to lead you to the place where you realize the personal

I does not exist. It never has, and it never will. Yet wouldn't it be wonderful if you could just sit down and realize all this in a flash and become free? We'll not allow ourselves to do that for some reason. We want to play the game of overcoming. Again, who has to awaken? It's all a pack of lies. How can the Self awaken? The Self never went to sleep. Do you not realize who you are now? You're not a mortal human. There are no words to express what you are. You have to find out. So you practice. After all, who does the practice? It's your body and your mind. If you can remember that there is no body or mind that exists, then there is no one to practice. So while you are practicing, remember that."

I love the way he puts it in such a no nonsense, practical way. Somewhere else in the book he says... "Do not think of enlightenment or awakening, or being liberated, or finding a teacher who can help you. You are beyond help. No one can do anything for you." All of this is becoming more and more obvious. Finding your website at this moment in my life got me very excited, and then I fell into some kind of self-pitying delusion that maybe Edward Muzika can actually "help" me... as if there is any help out there or an ointment to rub onto me that will fix what needs to be repaired. Edward... I am happy we made contact, and I think it helps... but what in the hell needs to be helped?? I think you know what is going on here with me, and I am watching this mind flipping about like a trout out of water. So, write again if you have a moment. I'll write again and tell you what's up. I really like knowing you are nearby.

The first lines of your website.... "If you seek God, Enlightenment, or self-knowledge, you are a rare one, both blessed and cursed by the most difficult of all seeking." Yes... I am blessed and cursed. You know what's happening here and sometimes I just want to scream and throw a fit. It's like the mind is launching an all out attack now, because I am finally observing its every move and watching it with dispassion. It's like breaking up with a girlfriend. You know the relationship can't go on anymore. It has to come to an end but I know it's going to get really loud and ugly as she is insulted that I don't need her any more. Thanks for reading and listening, Edward.
Write me any old time if you like.

Tom

August 20, 2005

Hi Tom,

Good to hear you are progressing. If you want to watch your mind, that is fine. But who is watching? The watcher and the mind are identical. The mind splits into two parts, the watched thoughts and the watcher. So watching the mind is still dividing the mind and you are left as mind entertaining mind.

Therefore, a dilemma. What to do?

Relaxing back into your gut is easy and gets you out of your head, thinking and splitting. No effort is involved. It is a relaxing effort, because the head energy and tension pass away.

Otherwise, keep going straight ahead.

Take care.

Ed

August 21, 2005

Hello again Edward.

I guess I am confused. I have been diligently pursuing Self-inquiry, and this always seem to be like an activity of "watching." Being aware of thoughts arising and then, instead of reacting to the thoughts, simply asking... "to whom do the thoughts arise?" But it hasn't been a permanent place to rest, either. It just seems to be a temporary way to distract the mind from the present assault of thoughts. I haven't really been able yet to "relax into my gut" because it seems like a mental activity, too.

I like the way you say that the mind can become as thick as stump. or whatever. I guess I am just about ready to let anything happen here. This is a very profound statement... "the watcher and the mind are identical." When I hear Robert, or Ramana, or Papaji say... "be silent" is this further progress in that direction? To rest the mind in the abdomen? I really want to avoid any mental or intellectual stimulation. These brains we have aren't really very smart, you know? Can you give me any instruction on how I might ease the mind towards my inside?

Thanks you for anything you can say that might help. And you may certainly use any of my letters to you if you want to create another chapter to your website. This would be a beautiful way to help others to see. I am feeling a very nice and lovely vibration right now just thinking about being instrumental in helping anybody else. But if you could write me back with a few suggestions, I would be most grateful.

Tom

August 22, 2005

Hi Tom,

Any activity is of the mind. Any. Watching, self-inquiry, sinking.

Self inquiry points you inward. Watching assumes you take the position of inward and watch the outward workings of thought.

But the I that is watching is still a phantom, it is not real. You are taking a position in the not real.

Feeling yourself sink back into your body is also a mind effort. But it is very easily accomplished. More difficult is opening the inner eye, but that comes later.

What I am giving you now is from my own experience. Robert never had to practice to get where you want to go, although you cannot as yet know where you want to go.

But the watching you are doing assumes the position of a visual watching of the mind meaning consciousness is stuck in the head. This is like a bad cold. The head gets stuffed. The body is much bigger and can take the stuff out of the head. Moving consciousness down into the body is an exercise just for you. You have a thought-cold.

This exercise also opens the inner eye. The visual consciousness disappears after a point in this exercise.

One expedient device is to imaging a cube of butter on the top of your head, and your head heat causes it to melt and flow down your body into you abdomen. Let it collect there with your consciousness.

Robert taught self-inquiry as a generic method for everyone, but he gave specific instructions for those with specific needs. Ultimately Who Am I transcends the body or mind because consciousness is neither. But solve the thought cold first.

Sinking consciousness into the body shuts down thinking. You will become very stupid because thoughts stop. When thoughts stop, the I disappears because I is just a concept, a word. This opens you to experiences that will transform you completely.

Ed

August 23, 2005

Hello again, Ed.

I've read your last letter several times now and am concentrating on the effort to move this "thought cold" down into my body. That's a good description to term this malady. It has truly been like a virus lately with me. Would it be true to say that since everything is unreal, then like in a dream, I can just imagine that I've got a thought cold, and a body, and I can just imagine that I am moving this virus down into the body? All of this seems like a dream... the body, the thoughts, the panic, the peace. I don't know what to do

or how to do it, so I guess I will just imagine that this trick is something to work with and I will remember to do this through today and the days to come, ok?

It's kind of like the self-inquiry activity. I do this because I read about this in Robert's book, and I've read of this also in Ramana's teachings. So, hopefully, I pursued that activity. I'll try anything, I guess. I just want to awaken. So Ed, do I just imagine that I am transferring thoughts out of my head and down into my body? So far, it hasn't been really easy to do. It's like I've got to create a scenario that this condition exists, then I somehow imagine that I am working to move thoughts down into the body. Could you write me back and tell me if I am getting stuck on something. By the way... thank you so much for all of your efforts lately to write and offer some guidance.

Tom

August 24, 2005

Dear Tom,

Don't make an effort out of it. That means the mind is searching for answers. Don't move the thoughts, thoughts follow where the attention is. Now your attention is in the eyes and head. Be gentle. Don't use the inner visual sense to do anything. Feel into your gut; relax into your gut. Move under the covering umbrella of disturbing thought.

If this does not work, you have two alternatives. Continue with the "Who am I" inquiry, or work to open and expand the inner eye. The latter is difficult and takes a lot of time. But we have to manage your thought cold now, because with the turmoil it is hard to make progress. Going from thinking and the inner vision of watching thoughts or looking for the I, go into inner feeling, the tactile sense to get before the thinking I.

The tactile sense is as big a trap as "looking" for the non-existent inner I because the mind is involved in making the practice effort. But both take you away from being thinking to the background consciousness of empty space in which thinking happens. As of now you do not know this inner space, visual or tactile. Get to know inner consciousness. Calm down. Sink into your body. It feels like falling backward into an abyss, but it helps.

September 4, 2005

Dear Edward,

I found your website just a few days ago, and since then I have been reading it every moment I have. I guess I am a spiritual seeker for a long time having intense periods of seeking, and other times just sinking into life's duties again. I am married, have 4 children and am a yoga teacher. During my search, I "discovered" Advaita just a few months ago, and for some reason I am attracted to it.

I have many doubts and I am very confused and mostly I think it is time for me to find a teacher. I do all the work alone. Just reading, and practicing (not so much) - I also know that when I will be ready the right teacher will show up.

I have also lost interest in many things in life and many people I used to talk to (we just don't share the same issues any more), and other things I used to do. All I want is to be left alone, have time to read and be quiet. All this make me feel lonely. I am not depressed , I know that - I do all the things I have to do with my family and as a teacher. But I am a little lost, my mind is thinking too much, but at least I am aware of it.

I think that until I will find a teacher, I should stick to one practice for a while. So I read what you said about opening the third eye and I think this would be a good place to start now. Can you please tell me how to do it? For how long? whatever you think would be helpful.

And yes, I know I am asking stupid questions, but I cant help it.

Thank you for the site and for your honesty. My English is ok I think, thanks to Israeli school system. But if there is something you didn't understand, let me know.

Thank you again,

Michal

September 4, 2005

Hello Michal,

I am very happy to hear from you. You have done the great work of bringing life into the world and nurturing it. It sounds like you know it is time for you to begin your final work.

Being quiet and by yourself is very good; the more time you can do this, the better.

Yes, the old will fall away. You feel alone because you have changed. You are used to the comfort of being around people with chattering. The chattering no longer comforts you. You understand that.

Mind is like the wind-blown waves atop the sea. Your energy and concentration is in those waves. You know that. So, how to get deeper where the waves do not move? As Robert would say, your only freedom is to turn within. But what does that mean?

As a yoga teacher, you may already have inner vision; your eye may have already opened. If so, we will move beyond that.

Can you turn your vision inward? Does this mean anything to you?

If you close your eyes and imagine your outward looking now turning around, does it feel as if you are looking inward? This sounds so very simple.

You see, so long as I can remember, my entire universe is pervaded by light, a transparent light that penetrates and surrounds all phenomena, including my imaginary body, imaginary mind and imaginary space. I only vaguely remember what it was like not to have that.

So I have to know what you see, when you turn your sense of looking outward, into looking inward. Do you see anything, or are you caught by the direction to turn within and are aware only of your mind thinking what the instruction means?

Be as precise and accurate as you can be. Is there confusion about how to turn inward? Is there only impenetrable darkness? Do you see light? Where is the light? What is its color? Or, can you see already see everything? Is your inner space as open and lighted as your outer space?

You have to be careful so as not to waste time. Opening the inner eye is a preparatory exercise only, not at all part of the traditional way Advaita is taught. Opening the eye is just one way of getting to know your own consciousness. Self-inquiry, Atma Vicharya, asking "Who Am I?" is another. They just work at different levels.

Ultimately, there is no inner space, nor outer space. There is no difference between them. You might say they are both imaginary. But, you don't know that yet except as an idea.

Being a yoga teacher and having the idea of an inner eye and inner vision means something to you. It may be your specific way of surfing in consciousness. It may not be. You need a way that is natural for you.

Let us explore this together.

Take care of everyone, including yourself,

Do you mind whether I use your letter or not on my website? You ask a wonderful question and I think you are ready for a journey. Other people may see your question and you theirs. Then we are all together on the same journey.

Ed

September Letters

September 8, 2005

Hello Edward:

I keep returning to your website like a moth to the candle-light. And I keep ordering and reading/hearing Robert's discourses. I keep at letting go the "I-thought" all through the day. Lester Levenson's Sedona Method which you must have heard of is of tremendous help to me at emptying out the shenanigans of that curious engram.

Thanks for the suggestion of reading the Ashtavakra Gita, I do that too.

Just wanted to send my gratitude once again to you and then onto Robert.

Warmest Regards,

Dino

September 9, 2005

Dear Dino

Do you mean you release on the Who Am I question? That is, you were caught on it?

If so, that is interesting. If so, what are the results?

Edward

Septmber 9, 2005

Hi Edward:

Thanks for your question.

Lester Levenson was a contemporary of Robert Adams and some tell me that Robert and Lester had their school/ashram about the same time in Sedona. Were you there too?

Lester Levenson says that the "I" Thought of Ramana and Robert, Is basically the three fundamental desires of "wanting approval", "wanting control" and "wanting security". Indeed, all thoughts of the I-thought, upon inquiry, would be a result of the above three wants.

These wants in turn are caused by feelings and a physical clutching in the chest or stomach area and Lester's "Release Technique" is a getting in touch with the "want" and then letting go of the "clutch".

I think you have spoken of a similar technique to one of the questioners on your website.

I have found that it is a powerful and rather speediest method to quiet the mind and with the clarity it gives I find my self functioning in the world with terrific abundance and ease. It is a meditation with your eyes open in real time.

Robert of-course provides more understanding about the "I" thought and Consciousness. Lester too was a Ramana disciple and his philosophy dovetails perfectly with Robert's. I find each complementing the other in helping me on.

I am a physician in active practice with a wife and 3 children.

Thanks as always. I'll stay in touch and pick your brain again and again.

Warmest regards,

DINO

September 10, 2005

Hi Dino,

Robert and I came to Sedona after Lester died. It was Lester's students who sponsored us coming out. I never moved to Sedona and I explain why in the section [Dancing with God](#).

I was much impressed with the Sedona Method. I took a seminar with Pam when she was coming to Satsang to see Robert a few times.

Robert was not much impressed with the technique although I do not see how they would conflict. They would, of course operate on different levels.

Lester's on a more physical level and Robert's aimed also at the destruction of I by seeing it as a conceptual construct.

Lester's technique would be more consistent in terms of unraveling tension with a Samadhi state. I am going to have to think about it.

When you have time, tell me more about yourself.

Thanks,

Ed

September 11, 2005

Dear Edward,

Thank you for your prompt response.

There is not much to say about myself:

I was born into a Hindu Brahmin family in Zanzibar, E. Africa. Came here to go to college and have stayed on since. My interest in things spiritual perhaps goes back a couple of life times. I have searched hard and long-since early childhood: power of positive thinking, psycho-cybernetics, est, NLP, scientology, Bhagwan Rajneesh and finally now, Lester and Robert. I think that Lester's technique provides a physical, experiential way of stilling the mind and I have achieved much headway by using it. Robert on the other hand gives the sharp, intellectual understanding of the experience of advaita.

After receiving your last e-mail, I re-read your accounting of using Lester's technique and how it helped you experience a Satori of sorts. You are a lucky man-your labours have been rewarded !!!

What you experienced later was built on this? Can you now sustain the Peak Experience you speak of ongoingly?

Could you suggest anything else I could look at?

Thanks, Edward, for your kindness about my case.

I am grateful.

Warmest regards,

DINO (DINESH)

September 12, 2005

Hi Dinesh,

Your past sounds a lot like mine except I became a psychologist. At least a real doctor can help people.

I thought Lester's release method genius. I liked it and used it. However, the using can be endless. I cannot see the releasing coming to an end. Maybe it can; it appeared to work for Lester. That is, situations that arise are endless; therefore, if you do not find the core problem, the releasing can go on forever following each situation. That is, how do you get from the periphery to the core?

I was around the Sedona people for some time, even those quite close to Lester. On the whole, they were not very nice people. I do not want to go into it more. So, I judge the method by the results.

Remember, Lester's concept of what the I is, security, etc., is just a concept. Unless releasing can release one from releasing, the method and person practicing it are still time and mind-bound.

My way was Zen and Advaita. Thousands and thousands of hours of meditation and hanging around Zen masters, gurus and Robert.

My overriding practice for 20 years was Who Am I, even as a Zen monk.

I do not suggest that as a first practice because there are so many things that can go wrong.

It is only after I stopped practicing anything that anything happened. When all was forgotten and I was no longer actively seeking I.

The acute rush caused by the two awakenings lasted about a year. It is not accurate to ask whether the peak experience can be maintained because each moment is new and no experience is more than momentary. It is more accurate to ask how long did it take before the apparent I could reenter the world? About three or four years. Yet, it is only during the past six months that I have felt I could come out and actually help anyone.

It is just different now. When active, I am just like everyone else. When still, the apparent world I know disappears leaving just infinite space, infinite light and in that matrix, the sensations that create knowledge of the body/mind. The body/mind's existence is only knowledge, concepts. There is no "real" existence.

However, even this is still a disturbance. Even the highest samadhi or highest knowledge is added onto me. The whole world, sleep, deep sleep, waking, pain, pleasure, etc. are added onto and do not touch me.

This is the secret of Robert's greatness, and which he gave me. Most people stop when they attain the unitary mind, the no-boundary mind. They think that is enlightenment and that is the end. It is not. There is one more step to see that even the unitive mind is not I.

If I were to do it over, I would not have wasted my time trying to find out I did not exist, but I would have found myself a saint, such as Rama Krishna and devoted myself to loving and helping all people, animals, sentient beings. This is what has been happening to me for the last eight years. I made the choice 40 years ago to follow the way of sages instead of saints, now I go the other way.

Take good care Dinesh. Your profession alone is extremely important. If you can act each moment helping people, animals, all sentient beings, that itself brings the highest close.

Thanks for the questions. It is questions such as yours that help me articulate my experiences in a way that I think I can help others. Feel free to ask more.

Ed

September 12, 2005

Dear Edward:

Whew !! Your note was so insightful. Thank you for pointing out that the root problem with the Sedona Method is the Releaser and that releasing endlessly as I have been doing for the last three years just reifies the " 'I' thought " with each cycle of letting go of the lack of approval/control/security.

Yes, Edward, I see that for the Releaser (who is now bound to releasing), the trap is sprung - as it is for the follower of any other dogma .

You have pulled away another rug from under me. As Robert says, there are no accidents. Now all that is left for me is to just rest in that Profound Ignorance, keeping aware that my ground of being is senior to all motions, mentations and transactions of the 'I' thought. This is still an intellectual exercise but I have enjoyed some restfulness these last 24 hours--releasing had become like a job.

One more question: After losing your apparent 'I', you say it took almost three or so years for you to re-enter the world. How does one function in the meantime ?

Did the enlightenment state still allow you to hold down a job, pay bills and such? Lester says it took him almost 20 years before he could re-enter the world and that he had to watch a lot of TV to get his first tear that enabled him to come back.

Thanks. Don't let me become a pest. Robert had once said too many questions about the Silence State bummed him out. I hope mine don't do that to you.

Warmest regards.

DINESH

September 13, 2005

Hi Dinesh,

I've been off in the fake world for a while. Sorry to take so long to get back to you. Do not worry about pestering me. This is my life's work: helping people find themselves.

Yes, you understand the core is the releaser. But there is no releaser. Once the releaser goes, he is discovered to have no existence. He is and was a phantom, a creation of thought. There is no releaser; there is no releasing. When this is known, all effort disappears, except to get up in the morning. Of course, so does the mind, body, etc. disappear too.

Concerning "coming back," each person is different. Ramana took many years because it happened unexpected to a little boy who had no clue. People like me who had been in void meditation or prancing around in the inner world of self-illuminated emptiness for years, when the awakening occurs, we have been circling the cup, so-to-speak, for years. So coming back was not so different from the process of going away in the first place. After I met Robert in 1988, everything began to fall apart. Part of it was the spiritual touch of a master who was trying to take all comfort, security, understanding and arrogance away, and part of it was that I was not paying attention to the world anymore, so it did not pay attention to me.

I was quite out of it between when it happened in 1995 and I finally was able to return to "productive" work in 1999 or 2000. That was a very dark period. In fact though, I was quite out of it between 1992 and the experiences in 1995. Then, out of nowhere, as these things do happen after the enlightenment thing bites you, I was offered a job making a fairly good living doing that I had done for years before Robert, namely forensic psychology. This I could do standing on my head. For the life of me, I could not have done something new that required attention.

Even now, it is very hard to pay attention to the apparent world. Even surfing consciousness, which I had done for so many years before awakening, has lost its sparkle.

The sole reason I am continuing involvement at all is a desire to help others understand who they are and to get free and my deep commitment to taking one small part of the world a place of caring and comfort. My comfort comes when I can help others and when I see others helping still others.

Most people do not want to get free, they want more of whatever they are looking for. I can help them with that too.

I have no choice in this. I am impelled by my past, my situation, my training, my relationship with my teacher and with consciousness.

Therefore, ask anything you want.

Ed

September 9, 2005

Hi Ed,

Sorry I could not reply earlier and thank you for your reply.

When I close my eyes I see nothing most of the time. Sometimes I see a small white light, and then it is gone. I know I should not look for something, and not try to hold on to it, but many times I try to do this anyway. Sometimes I see unfamiliar faces for short moments. But almost all the time I feel vibrations.

Actually, when I first started sitting I had a very strong and frightening experience. I felt like I was going to disappear, a strong vibration was moving down through me or moving me down, and I remember trying to stop it, and I did. I think that today I would not do this, I even don't know what was it, but than I was afraid. So now I can feel vibration everywhere, not so strong and not moving down. Just a movement of energy. When I try to be in the third eye, I feel a vibration there, sometime I feel pain.

At the beginning I would stop, and the pain would go away immediately, then I tried to stay with the pain, same thing it will go.

About the thinking process, sadly I must say that I am thinking almost all the time, I have a strong and stubborn mind. But many times, when I have no intention to stop the thought (I know that I cant stop them), things are just happening through me. Many things that I say, or simply

know are not coming from me. I know it.

So, my practice is not strong, sometimes I practice, sometimes I do not, and usually not for long periods. (I will attend a 4 days meditation in October with a Tibetan monk who will visit Israel). I also tried a few months ago after reading Ramana Maharshi to concentrate on who I am, but I was just hearing my self saying it. I think that you are right about me wasting time.

What do you think is the right practice for me now - at least for a while, because I feel that I am jumping too much from one practice to another, and the constant reading that gives me real inspiration is also a place to run away too, hiding from the real work.

Thank you so much

Michal

September 11, 2005

Dear Michal,

The vibration you feel is Kundalini. Usually you can feel it moving up and then moving down. Sometimes it moves up through the spine and then down through your forehead and face. Sometimes it moves up one side of the spine and down the other. Sometimes you might feel blockages somewhere in the spine.

Following the Kundalini is one way to get inside yourself under thinking. But it is an intermediate practice from the Advaita point of view, which would be O.K. by itself, but you might not know when to stop and move on. It is easy to get distracted by Kundalini type experiences as they are quite dramatic, absorbing, and make you feel as if your are advancing and that your practices are bearing fruit, but ultimately make you miss enlightenment.

On the other hand, some teachings make Kundalini everything and never advance beyond ecstatic experiences, lights, strange powers, controlling the body, etc. and knowing and loving consciousness, such as those of Self-Realization Fellowship.

Opening the third eye is a little more advanced and can take a long time, but less can go wrong than chasing the Kundalini. In fact though opening the third eye will focus the Kundalini towards the goal of expanding the inner light. When you feel any energy movement up the spine, when it reaches your head, focus its energy on the spot of light you see. That will help it expand.

Read my section under Practices and the first chapter of Dancing With God.

You might want to look at the section on microanalysis also, as it is good to teach your students as a guided meditation to open their inner world and get them acquainted with the concept that neither body or the sense of I exist.

To determine what practice is right for you, you have to know what is it you want. What are you looking for?

If you are looking for something that helps you to the final goal of enlightenment--liberation--most quickly, you should practice either asking "Who Am I?" or doing sitting meditation doing nothing. The latter is difficult to learn correctly. You just sit and watch everything until even the effort to watch disappears. This is called "Shikantaza," and is the essential practice of Soto Zen.

Asking "Who Am I?," is similar to a Rinzai Zen Koan, a question with no verbal answer. It is easier than just sitting doing nothing because there is something to focus on. With Shikantaza there is nothing to focus on and you become acutely aware of the chaotic mind and want to stop. This practice is best practiced in a monastery or an urban center where you can have uninterrupted practice for days at a time.

The "Who Am I?" question is a universal practice. Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Hindus, Buddhists use it and have for three thousand years. The story of such a practice is found in Kapleau's Three Pillars of Zen, the chapter on Basui.

On the other hand, if you want something that can both take you to liberation and bring more peacefulness and make you a better yoga teacher, practice opening the third eye and illumine your inner world. This could take six months to a couple of years. However, it could take another ten to twenty years of sitting in the illumined Void of pure consciousness before awakening comes.

This, of course, is painting in very broad stroke and would vary a lot between people. You might find Shikantaza easy from the beginning.

So, you need to decide as to what you want, at least at this moment.

If you practice is open the third eye, read the section in the Practices and the Dancing with God sections on my site. The small white light you said you see, that is what you want to concentrate on. You need to expand it until it fills the universe. You can change your mind some day, but not before your inner world is properly illuminated.

Grasp hold of either the Who Am I question or opening the third eye.

Then go straight ahead. Do not look side to side. Do not read so much. Do not distract yourself with doubts. Do not wobble. Just spend all the time you can following the practice you chose. Read yourself instead of books.

Robert said it all. Persistence is the key to make everything happen, eithe rin the inner world or the outer world of the waking dream.

Choose. Once you choose, stick with it as if your life depended on it.

Ed

XX

September 22, 2005

Dear Edward,

I am so happy to hear from you. yes, this is what I have been waiting for, and many thanks for your advice. It is very rare to find people like you who only wants to help, nothing else.

I read the Practice section, as well as Dancing With God and I will read them again. I will take your advice to practice opening the third eye, and I understand I will have to be patient. So thank you very much again, I will let you know every once in a while how things are going.

It is O.k with me to put my name on my letters if you wish too.

take care,

Michal

September 29, 05 from David

Dear Edward,

Great cat photos! I wish I weren't allergic to them. They're such beautiful animals. We have a neighbor cat, Bagels, who comes and sits outside our back door sometimes until I come out and see her. She's a little feisty but has a good heart. I enjoy our quiet time together.

Thanks for the information on Robert too. I think your site has the only photos of him on the Internet, and the stories you tell of his relationship with you is heartwarming.

Have you ever thought of starting a kirtan/chanting group? You could work in a bit of Robert's teachings before and after each session. Those who were sincerely seeking peace could come to you later for guidance. The others could just chant. Just an idea. If you're ever in Kansas, you're welcome to chant with me anytime. I don't play harmonium and don't always sing on key, but I've got a few decent CD's, and Robert could keep time for us.

Thanks for being who you are, whoever and whatever that may be. The really good news is that you are here, breathing in and out each day, and offering your love and friendship.

Blessings,

David

September 29, 05

Dear David,

Thank you very much for your supportive words. Makes me feel putting up the website was not in vain.

I would love to start a chanting group but found those with just CDs or tapes not to be self-sustaining. You need musicians and singers to keep a group going.

In the past, I had a Satsang with tape chanting. My wife is an ex-opera singer and she sings like an angel. However, it was not enough to sustain.

People came to Satsang with a curiosity about Advaita and Buddhist teachings, but could not sustain interest in them because people who want to go below the surface are rare.

Many of the curious ones had no desire to chant, and chanters had little desire for teachings. I am not a promoter. I don't have the mentality to go out and start a Satsang or chanting group with tapes. I'd rather be by myself and have minimal involvement in the world unless there was a strong motivation to teach. Robert was forced to teach because his illness made work impossible.

For now, this website is it. If people want to come or if locals find me, it may happen.

Thanks for the thoughts once again.

Feel free to ask any questions you might have about practices, where you are emotionally or spiritually, or any questions about Robert and his teachings.

Ed

From Paul

September 29, 2005

The question: What should (?!?) I be doing with the rest of "my" life?

If there is a "size 38 regular answer" to that question, read no further and please share that answer. If you need to know more before answering, read as much as you need to (or can stand).

I lost interest in the world at a relatively young age, if I ever had any to begin with. I was always bright, but had little/no ambition to excel or get that great job. In fact, I have never had a job that I liked.

After an eight-year stint in law enforcement, I went to law school (age 34) and then worked for 15 years at a public housing agency (evicting poor people from public housing, mostly, as I used to tell folks when they asked what I did). I was laid off from that job, to my relief, two and a half years ago and have not worked since. I am now 57 years old.

About the only constant in my life has been, since I read Siddhartha at age 22, an interest in things spiritual. For the first 20 years or so this amounted to only

reading occasional books (mostly zen). There was then a period of fairly “serious” involvement with vipassana. In about 1990 I discovered Advaita through Catherine Ingram at a Ram Dass retreat. Catherine moved to Portland, where I was living, shortly after that and I went to her satsangs regularly for a number of years. There were two or three retreats with Gangaji after that (along with a few Ram Dass / Krishna Das retreats - I love chanting) and most recently a few weekends and retreats with Pamela Wilson. My wife and I also made a trip to India (first time for both) last winter and went to a Ramesh retreat and spent time at Ramana Ashram. (We were also at the coast when and where the tsunami hit, but that’s another story.)

Anyway, although Pamela has actually encouraged me to start giving satsang here locally, I don’t feel remotely qualified to be doing that and have never felt that I have fully “gotten” what the Advaita teachers talk about. At best, I feel only “half baked.”

I would very much like to go be with a Ramana or Poonjaji or Robert Adams, but they’re all gone now. Is there anyone now living that is in the same class and who is “accepting students?”

Although I “handle” doing nothing much better than most, I still feel the need to do something. I know Robert has said not to worry about such things, because those people without jobs are unhappy because they don’t have jobs and those that have jobs are unhappy because they hate their jobs and what will happen will happen. But I do “worry” about what I “should” be doing.

At least one teacher, Ramesh I think, I know recommends working even if you don’t have to because it occupies the mind and leaves less for needless worry about unimportant things. (I suppose, actually, that all worry is needless and everything is unimportant.)

A random thought upon reading this description you wrote about Robert: “Usually he remained quiet, sitting in the background, taking everything in. At lunch or dinner, everyone else would talk about all kinds of things, and Robert was mostly ignored, quietly eating while everyone else entertained each other in animated conversation.” This describes me exactly, although I’m sure not for the same reasons.

So... any help / insight / direction you care to offer would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your help and for your web site.

Paul

September 29, 2005

Dear Paul,

I love your question and honesty. Give me a couple of days to weigh an appropriate answer as opposed to knee-jerk stuff. I have a lots of crappy reports and deadlines I have to meet now. In a short answer re teachers, no, I know no one that is alive that is of the same caliber as Robert or even Soen Sahn. However, I know nothing about the current generation of teachers. I stopped looking at teachers soon after I met Robert. Even before I met Robert I had more or less stopped. I had read Prior to Consciousness by Nisargadatta and felt no need thereafter.

I never knew about Robert either until he happened to me. So to speak, he appeared out of no-where. He always said the great teachers are never publicly known. Of course there is that old saying, maybe crap, maybe not, that when the student is ready, the guru will appear. Perhaps that means when you are ripe, any Tom, Dick or Harry will do.

Ed

September 29, 2005

Hi Ed,

Yes, I'm getting that sense, more and more, that if there is a "great" teacher out there now, he's (or she's) probably not well known. I guess I was kinda hoping that you knew about this teacher and would direct me there.

I was just (re)reading your piece on "Our Mission, Our Work." Sounds like you're trying to unsettle my comfort in Robert's words regarding there's nothing one can do to make things better in the world because for every "better" there is a corresponding "worse." Especially since I sit here with a certain "power" (being a lawyer and all) to try and right some wrongs. But that's a whole 'nother discussion about whether taking action causes more pain overall than it alleviates.

There is one sentence in that piece which seems important but which needs some editing: "Robert used to warn everyone not just be self-involved as part of their work to become enlightened." Could you help me out with that?

Thanks again for your help.

Paul

September 30, 2005

Paul,

I felt compelled to respond to your last email now.

I was 50 when I had my experiences. I had done nothing else but seek enlightenment from 1968. I did everything. Tens of thousands of hours meditating, studying with seven or eight Zen masters, most famous, and a few other spiritual teachers, all of them the old school, not the American wannabes.

I heard them talking, lecturing and lived with them face to face from 1968 on. I knew most of them did not have it. One can tell about these things when you are at it long enough.

After this realization, after trying for 25 years to understand the Heart Sutra, the Ashtavakra Gita, etc., I knew that I still had not attained. I understood, but had not attained. You know exactly what I mean.

All of those I met understood Advaita, but from my view, had not attained. In fact, after Balsekar and Poonja, knowing has become synonymous with attaining. However, they are as different as night and day. You know that.

So, here poor Ed had tried for umpteen years and had all kinds of amazing adventures in the outside world and the inside. But, I knew I had failed to attain.

At some point, I gave up. I recognized if I were ever going to get it, it had to come to me, I had done everything that I could and I had failed. This was maybe 1992 or so. I had already been with Robert four or five years. At first, I surrendered to Robert and that did not feel right, so I just surrendered altogether. Whatever was to come was to come. I gave up hope. I abandoned the task. So it was for two or three years.

I was fortunate because at that time I had money and could spend lots of time with Robert doing nothing. Then enlightenment came and for another five years, I still could do nothing. There was no need. The doer's doing, died. Not only did I not care anymore, but the sense of ownership disappeared. I mean I was making money again and struggling to be in the world, but inside, I didn't care anymore about getting anywhere, becoming a teacher, etc., I just wanted to take care of my kitties and stop all the other animals being killed, and help others in ways I considered helpful, like giving money or clothes to the homeless or donating money to charities, doing feral cat TNR (trap, neuter, release), etc. Let me tell you, I got into a lot of trouble with "authorities" by maintaining feral cat colonies in a wealthy neighborhood with City Hall connections in Santa Monica.

These kinds of actions are still the focus of my attention, such as reform of the various municipal shelter systems, helping individuals in various ways, etc. This website teaching thing has just snuck up on me during the past five months.

I would suspect there is nothing you can do except see the impossibility of getting enlightenment from your own efforts. This goes against the teachings of a hundred traditions who counsel to practice hard. Seung Sahn always encouraged harder effort, but he never advised what effort or what goal except to get a clear mind. He appeared to mean that by struggling to answer his koans, that could be achieved.

You cannot do that anymore. You are too embedded in the human world and disappointed that the efforts you have made have failed you. This would almost certainly undermine your self-confidence in attaining, which is good.

As to finding the right teacher, a great teacher, looking for one is still part of the same trap of seeking and making effort.

Here is the key:

The secret is silence. If you can get infinitely quiet within yourself, a deep, deep quiet, realization will come (maybe better to say might come). Of course, that requires you have given up seeking altogether and that is almost impossible for a life-long seeker. You can try to enforce silence by watching your mind or seeking the source asking Who Am I, but at some point even these techniques you have to give up. Yet, it is still a very good idea to try, but lightly, gently, with no expectations.

On a practical level, you could do what I was doing before it happened. Work as little as possible. Spend as much time as you can alone. Do not read too much or watch TV etc., or at least allow the habits to die down. With your spare time, do whatever work that makes you feel happy or content if you can. That helps you calm down and lighten up inside yourself.

Importantly, listen to sacred music as much as possible. I highly recommend Muktananda tapes as most others that I have heard are crap and Muktananda tapes are a staple. They are hard to find. Perhaps you could find tapes by his disciples, such as Nityananda or Shankarananda. I believe Nityanada has his own tapes now, but Shankarananda not. But for me, it was the music. Maybe it is genetic and comes with the name Muzika.

You might want to keep looking inside to find the "I" using the inner visual sense. I never did stop doing that. For me, it was like breathing. All that I saw was the illumined space-like void of the mind, and I saw that always, like staring into the eyes of God..

You might gently use the Who Am I question, but very gently, quietly.

As much as possible do nothing. Doing nothing is hard for most. Maybe for a lawyer, it is even harder. (Put your own lawyer joke here.)

Then whatever happens, happens. Maybe you'll never get it, so resign yourself as did I. About the time I resigned, I decided if I were not going to get it, at least I'd do good in the world and I turned towards compassionate action. This turn has continued and strengthened after awakening. I have become a Dudely Do-Right, do-gooder. So what? It feels right. My every action is to help others and animals. The Buddhists call this becoming a Bodhisattva, a vow to save all sentient beings.

Don't get caught up in the Logical Ass paradox, unable to do anything because all options are equal. Instead of following your head, follow your heart.

Regarding what Robert said, he meant that a large majority of those who single-handedly fight for their own enlightenment, about others and their needs. In that self-involvement, they dry up and become dust. They need to become juicy. Forget the self-oriented search and help others too. There is a wonderful sense of relief of escaping our self-centered bag. He warned us of this trap over and over and told stories of those who failed because they never made the change from self-involvement to helping others. He also told a story of one guy he met who refused to chant, figuring it was un-Advaita-like. Robert

convinced him to at least try to join in together-action as Seung Sahn put it, rather than stubbornly refuse. Robert said when he gave in and chanted, he liked it, and apparently had a deep realization soon thereafter.

As St. Paul said, "Remember to take into account the concerns of the weakest of your brothers and sisters." So be it.

I hope that helps. I know where you are. I don't think you are far away. So give it up if you can. Actually, it is probably impossible to give it up until you have hit your own private bottom. The last step is beyond mind or effort. You, as a seeker and doer, cannot get there. So give it up.

The best you can do in terms of effort is slow down, listen to sacred music, read Nisargadatta and Robert only, but not too much. Once in a while read the Ashtavakra Gita or the Heart Sutra or read Ramana. But gently.

Good luck,

Ed

September 30, 2005

Hello Ed. I just wanted to say hello and reach out, give a tap on your shoulder. I greatly appreciate your website, your life story, your great friendship with Robert, and the attention you have spent sharing some words with me. I know that all experience is constant change, and so, I can report that my crisis of tension and bewilderment has become less so in the past few weeks. Still, there is no doubt that my awareness of my being is in a highly sensitive level and I watch ever so closely everything that is unfolding.

I am not very peaceful. The friction is ever present. But this friction is very much like a grinding wheel that has been wearing away a great many bad habits, sensory daydreams, old fantasies, and just a bunch of crap that I used to give importance and energy to.... these interests and diversions have been blasted out of my life. I do not have any energy to expend and my follies are becoming REALLY obvious now.

I can't read the news or watch it on TV. Just a headline on the internet, something like... "20 dead in car bombing"... makes me feel weak and diminished. I don't want to know any details. And more and more, all of these events feel like they are happening within me. Like every event, every

experience, is as though I am creating it. It is very much like intellectual masturbation, all I am doing is playing with MYSELF!

Last night, as I slept in my bed, I had a very intense dream and "real" experience as I was focusing upon the search for the "I" and it felt as though I was coming to the big, final realization of no "I" to be found. Then, I "awoke" in my bed and pursued this search in the wee early hours of twilight until I placed my feet on the floor and began another day. This house building project sometimes scares me silly. So much to think about, so expensive, so much time it will take and so much longer to go. The "doer" is turning slowly on a spit. There is so much to "do" that maybe this is the cosmic experience that will explode the "doer" and the "I" or reveal their non-existence. I am watching. I can't help it. I don't know if watching is another trap, another delusion that creates more mental activity. I don't have the energy or the wisdom to discern what is wasteful repetition or a healthy place to abide. I don't know what to do.

I just wanted to say hello and tell you that I feel better by having a little contact with you for your wisdom and awareness. There is no one I know who I could speak to. But as I write these words, I think that there is NO ONE ANYWAY. I just want to KNOW that forever so that I live that reality. To really live it and know it and not just think that this must be the conclusion. Thinking doesn't work very well anymore.

Tom

October 1, 2005

I don't know what to tell you Tom. You almost steadfastly refuse to try to get under thinking, sink into your body or lie on your back and do nothing. You do seem better off than a month ago. Something is working.

You seem to know that quiet is good and doing nothing is better. Follow your own advice and do as little as possible and seek the I very gently. That is, just a gentle turning within.

PS: Sell the house if it is causing such problems.

Ed

October 7, 2005

Dear Ed

I just wanted to say thank you, to you and your website. It has a big impact on my being. (sorry my english, its not my native language).

Since several weeks I am coming back to your website and I am really astonished. Due to the visit I have bought the book from Robert "Silence of the heart" and when I started reading, it was kind of breath taking, page by page.

Something is going on now...

My spiritual path started five years ago when I studied Krishnamurti (which I still like and occasionally read). But he never gave real practical hints like the others (Ramana, Robert, Nisargadatta) on how you should

proceed....Then I went through ZEN Studies and Zazen but I am also kind of "cold" with it. The ZEN books didn't break my mind either and I proceeded to Ramana Maharshi, which book (Be as you are) guided me off totally different.

And now this book from Robert is a kind of top of the top books I ever read. It starts to break my mind. Words are useless, its just a big thank you to you and your contribution.

Regards,

Sven / Central Europe

October 8, 2005

Thanks Sven for writing.

Yes, Robert was that way in person too. I never met anyone even remotely like him even though I have met dozens or even more of the most famous gurus and teachers. Zen left me cold too.

There are other techniques on my site too that some find beneficial for attaining a quiet, no-thinking mind.

Feel free to write or ask questions.

Ed

October 9, 2005

Dear Ed

Thank you for writing back. I have a question which I cannot answer myself.

When I lie on bed and relax, I'm happy breathing into my Hara. As I do When sitting in Zazen, which I do once in a while for meditation, but on my own (not with others in the Zendo hall...I gave that up) I can then actually activate or go through my chakras, meaning concentrating on them. On all seven. I feel a kind of vibration. Thats ok and it feels nice. I feel a kind of power going up the spine until the top of my head. So far so good.

But to me its more like a body-game.

What for? Is it needed on the "path"? I have an almost constant little vibration above the eyes (outside) and with the eyes closed I can often see the white little light, as it was also described and written by Michal in the other letter. The last week it happened, that I was able to see with closed eyes the wall in my bedroom, but only for half a second, but I can repeat it. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

I read you article about the inner light. If I don't see the inner little white light while I am relaxing with closed eyes, I can see other big white bubbles, sometimes it looks like circles, moving on all sides around and I can force it down to the chest but not further. What I'm seriously looking for is being enlightened (I know its sounds stupid). That is what I honestly want. But I am asking you which of the two ways I should more focus on, if I continue with my body-game (sorry the expression but my English vocabulary is limited) until I reach a certain capability (to do what?) or shall I leave this and simply continue with the "I" questions, which I personally very like because of my more intellectual mind.

I just finished reading the book from Robert, for the first time, and I have to tell you that I never read a book in my life which goes that straight into my heart, I had to cry at the end. Out of nowhere, it wasn't even emotional, I guess. It was as if he would have been with me, so closed, so deep. As a former

bookshop owner I have read many books in my young life (age 39) but this one, very special. You know, some books talk straight into your heart others don't. I know I shouldn't read to much. I'm working on it.

I also like it to be alone, since a long time and I have not been watching TV since ages (we don't have one) and I do not read newspapers, because I am already beyond that because I don't care about the world since a long time, in a sense. Since I started reading Krishnamurti five years ago, my life has changed completely, which I very much like. By the way, I am married and have three kids and my wife is doing a 100% Job and I take care of the kids who are 2, 4 and 6 years old.

October 10, 2005

Hi Sven,

Yes Robert speaks to the heart. Since you have affinity with him and me, stick with the "Who am I?" question. It is a direct path to enlightenment. Read also the Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi and Prior to Consciousness by Nisargadatta. In fact, you might want to stick just to Robert and the Nisargadatta books, as Ramana can be confusing.

The energy thing, Kundalini, will continue to happen anyway. You are experiencing powerfully the beginning stages.

The Kundalini and white light will open your inner world to complete transparency to the infinite light of the self. It is an exciting phenomenon, which gives feedback that you are making progress spiritually. While it is not a dead-end, it can distract you from finding the absolute stillness necessary for the final enlightenment. Indeed, as long as you think there is a you making progress, it is a distraction.

I recommend this meditation to many, because I do not think they will stick to meditation unless they have that immediate and direct feedback.

There are a whole bunch of Tantric teachers for whom this kind of practice is their only practice along with chanting, such as Muktananda. It is a powerful method but limited, as is the understanding of Tantric teachers who have only attained the 'consciousness is everything' stage.

Just ask, "Who am I?" in the way Robert teaches as well as Nisargadatta.

I think it might be a good idea if I were to write a commentary on Robert's works as I already have in the introductions to his talks on this site. I should also write a commentary on Prior to Consciousness. Both will happen only down the line when I get free of my current editing work.

Write with questions when you have them.

Ed

October 7, 2005

Dear Ed

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October 9, 2005

Dear Ed

Thank you for writing back. I have a question which I cannot answer myself. When I lie on bed and relax, I'm happy breathing into my Hara. As I do when sitting in Zazen, which I do once in a while for meditation, but on my own (not with others in the Zendo hall...I gave that up) I can then actually activate or go through my chakras, meaning concentrating on them. On all seven. I feel a kind of vibration. That's ok and it feels nice. I feel a kind of power going up the spine until the top of my head. So far so good.

But to me it's more like a body-game. What for? Is it needed on the "path"? I have an almost constant little vibration above the eyes (outside) and with the eyes closed I can often see the white little light, as it was also described and written by Michal in the other letter. The last week it happened, that I was able to see with closed eyes the wall in my bedroom, but only for half a second, but I can repeat it. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

I read your article about the inner light. If I don't see the inner little white light while I am relaxing with closed eyes, I can see other big white bubbles, sometimes it looks like circles, moving on all sides around and I can force it down to the chest but not further. What I'm seriously looking for is being

enlightened (I know its sounds stupid). That is what I honestly want. But I am asking you which of the two ways I should more focus on, if I continue with my body-game (sorry the expression but my English vocabulary is limited) until I reach a certain capability (to do what?) or shall I leave this and simply continue with the "I" questions, which I personally very like because of my more intellectual mind.

I just finished reading the book from Robert, for the first time, and I have to tell you that I never read a book in my life which goes that straight into my heart, I had to cry at the end. Out of nowhere, it wasn't even emotional, I guess. It was as if he would have been with me, so closed, so deep. As a former bookshop owner I have read many books in my young life (age 39) but this one, very special. You know, some books talk straight into your heart others don't. I know I shouldn't read to much. I'm working on it.

I also like it to be alone, since a long time and I have not been watching TV since ages (we don't have one) and I do not read newspapers, because I am already beyond that because I don't care about the world since a long time, in a sense. Since I started reading Krishnamurti five years ago, my life has changed completely, which I very much like. By the way, I am married and have three kids and my wife is doing a 100% Job and I take care of the kids who are 2, 4 and 6 years old.

October 10, 2005

Hi Sven,

Yes Robert speaks to the heart. Since you have affinity with him and me, stick with the "Who am I?" question. It is a direct path to enlightenment. Read also the Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi and Prior to Consciousness by Nisargadatta. In fact, you might want to stick just to Robert and the Nisargadatta books, as Ramana can be confusing.

The energy thing, Kundalini, will continue to happen anyway. You are experiencing owerfully the beginning stages.

The Kundalini and white light will open your inner world to complete transparency to the infinite light of the self. It is an exciting phenomenon, which gives feedback that you are making progress spiritually. While it is not a dead-end, it can distract you from finding the absolute stillness necessary for

the final enlightenment. Indeed, as long as you think there is a you making progress, it is a distraction.

I recommend this meditation to many, because I do not think they will stick to meditation unless they have that immediate and direct feedback.

There are a whole bunch of Tantric teachers for whom this kind of practice is their only practice along with chanting, such as Muktananda. It is a powerful method but limited, as is the understanding of Tantric teachers who have only attained the 'consciousness is everything' stage. For Muktananda, there was a great emphasis on spiritual experiences, such as seeing the Blue Pearl, experiencing bliss, having saints come and talk to you, feeling love for everyone and the experience that the love flows from the self. However, all of these experiences are just happenings in consciousness and you are not that.

Just ask, "Who am I?" in the way Robert teaches as well as Nisargadatta.

I think it might be a good idea if I were to write a commentary on Robert's works as I already have in the introductions to his talks on this site. I should also write a commentary on Prior to Consciousness. Both will happen only down the line when I get free of my current editing work.

Write with questions when you have them.

Ed

October 11, 2005

I have not exhaustively read your website...so I hope my question is not to redundant....I have a teacher whom is simply my hatha yoga teacher...from my 2nd class I have had something happen to me almost every class out of the ordinary which I later discovered was kundalini symptoms....I had no idea at first what was going on...anyways.... Also, I have had many meditative experiences in his class so I continued to going to class despite feeling very confused, disoriented and alone....he is rude to me and he makes an effort to upset me by disturbing me when I am in a good meditative state....at first when I started having kundalini experience I was so freaked out that I asked him what was happening...he told me I was breathing improperly recently, I stopped going to his class because the kundalini was causing me to have so much energy in my body that working and functioning normally was impaired....I have only had one conversation face to face with this teacher and about 3 phone

conversation...each time he acts like he doesn't know what I am talking about.... I know that he knows more than he is letting on....my question is how do you know if a teacher is guiding you or just playing ego games on the energetic level with you....I was willing to put up with anything but only if it is worthwhile...I could never tell if this guy was simply playing with his powers or if he truly values consciousness for the sake of consciousness....it drove me crazy for a while because my experiences were pure but my experience of him was not really pure...he seemed out of control on all ends of the spectrum...also the Rajaneesh ...I noticed that you said he was enlightenedhow do you explain his out of control behavior ie. Drugs, abuse of devotees, and his perversions....

Cedar

October 11, 2005

Hi Cedar,

Your yogi sounds not very advanced. He may not have awakened his own Kundalini. Does he ever mention Kundalini experiences in his classes or does he only teach poses and talks about abstract things like love, God, health, etc.? If he has not awakened his own Kundalin, your doing so would likely embarrass him knowing you are going where he has not.

Yoga teachers and gurus are a dime a dozen. Dump him. Get with someone you can trust and can explain your experiences. Really, listen to me. Otherwise you can live for years trying to guess whether he is a jerk or he is infinitely wise. If he were advanced, he would be teaching far beyond Hatha yoga.

As you know, I have just added explanations of Kundalini experiences both in my Ed_online section, and also a new page, "My understanding."

Yes, Kundalini experiences can be very frightening, but also exciting. I had them for years with little guidance, except for a while with Zen Master Kapleau. He told me not to worry. I did worry though. In any event, I am still here.

The Kundalini is awakening, so to speak, in you. It will work its way through your appearance body until some day you will realize you have no body and you are not the body. In the meantime, you are scared. Don't worry. Relax for now. The experiences are just outside of your frames of reference. When I had my

experiences, there was precious little in print about the whole range of Kundalini experiences. I am sure there is more now.

My advice is just to relax and watch it happen. The relaxing is the frightening part, because you have to trust where Kundalini and consciousness are taking you, who does not exist.

Kundalini is really only a beginners or intermediate stage. Some stay at that stage all their lives and progress no more.

I never knew Rajneesh face to face. I only saw how he presented. His movements, expressions and teachings are all consistent with an enlightened person.

Do not be too concerned with his actions. There are many explanations and you will probably not accept any.

Part of being enlightened is being able to step out of all of your conceptualizations, such as moral, immoral, self-destructive, teaching, etc. Of course the danger then is that you start doing harm to others if you go too far. This does not mean the jerk is not enlightened. It only means he is becoming a jerk. This will were off.

Part of the way he acted may be teaching liberation by getting away from the norm of human interactions. Personally, I think this was part of his trip.

Part of his actions may be he didn't care anymore about life and whether he lived or died. Nisargadatta was this way as was Ramana. By this I mean there may be a level of self-destructiveness and not wanting to be in the world of appearance anymore.

Add in any more parts you want.

You hear the negatives from those who judge him, but did thousands stay around him because he was a pervert?

Get out. Don't torture yourself. Dump the chump and find someone you can trust and will explain Kundalini experiences to you. You must already know the theory, but the experiences scare you. No need. Be happy.

Ed

October 11, 2005

Hi Ed, I have been totally fascinated by your website. I did spiritual practices on and off for 25 years - Transcendental meditation in the 70s and Siddha yoga in the 80s and early 90s. About ten years ago I became disgusted with guru oriented spirituality and spiritual trips in general. I asked myself a lot of questions for a while and then just walked away from the whole thing. I totally stopped doing spiritual practices and just forgot about it. All I attained was disillusionment.

Sometimes I follow a link to a spiritual site, but it always seems either silly or nauseating. So your website has been a real shock. I can't believe that I am doing this but I've decided to ask you some spiritual questions:

1. At the end of your "Introduction to Meditation" page you wrote, "You come to the table with it, or you do not." Are there certain types people who are more likely than others to awaken? For example, people who were on some path and who were great meditators, or who had lots of spiritual experiences, etc. People like UG Krishnamurti, Bernadette Roberts, and Suzanne Segal just awakened spontaneously. Maybe at the other end of the spectrum, some people have no chance of awakening, even with good practice and a good guru. What do you think?

2. When I was in Atlanta my wife and I fed some feral cats that lived near our place. Especially one that became "our cat" and learned to come inside to eat, although we could never get closer than 3 feet away. She brought her kittens to us when they were old enough and we started taming two of them. After 2-3 months we trapped them, got them neutered and released them. A few days later we went away for 2 weeks. We never saw them again and we are sure they died. My wife was very upset because if we hadn't made them dependent on us they would have survived. I told her that they benefited from the love and care we gave them for a few months. Otherwise they would have remained totally feral and uncared for. Do you think that's correct? Or would they have been better off without us, living as feral cats without human love and care?

3. Writing about your first awakening you said, "Science, like the history book, is part of the dream, creating a structure for the

images. Nor did the rest of the world, out-of-sight exist: Not France, not Russian, not Cleveland." Are you from Cleveland? I grew up in Cleveland Heights. Just wondering.

Thanks for this remarkable website.

Jerry

October 11, 2005

Hi Jerry, nice to hear from you.

Regarding the coming to the table. Yes, I believe there are some who no matter how hard they practice or what they do, they will not get it. Sometimes, as Robert said, because they are too smart. Their minds work well and they rely heavily on it. Obsessive compulsives I would think would have a tough times.

Some others may get it and then reject it because they don't like it. They want to go back to where they came from and the local self reasserts itself.

Others get it without trying.

But there are time honored techniques that even if you don't get it, it is not a wasted life, such as constant meditation with no goal of enlightenment, listening to sacred music, hanging around spiritual communities, becoming a monk or nun, and mostly, learning how to love and take responsibility for your world. That is always heart-warming. One abbott of a Los Angeles Sri Lankan temple said "Buddhism is a way of life." True. It can be a beautiful life, especially if you are a monastic monk and the whole community takes care of you (Sarcastic aside).

Concerning the cats.

Do not be too sure they died. It is quite possible though. Usually cats are more resilient than that. It depends on how old they were when they were neutered and how soon thereafter you abandoned them. If their mother was still around, she was feral and could still teach them how to survive. If the mother is gone too, they may have re-located.

I am trying to comprehend why you left them for two weeks without making arrangements. Neighbors could feed them. Pet sitters are all around; you can find their cards at vets' offices. If not that, you could have boarded them for two weeks.

If you cared enough to take responsibility for their lives, you should not have abandoned them. Now you are trying to escape your guilt by thinking you gave them a good life for a few months. That does not wash. Would you say the same about a child you fostered?

Your wife was wrong also if she thought you should not have tamed them and taken responsibility in the first place. That too is cruel. We are all our brothers' and sisters' keepers.

However, if she meant you should not have taken two weeks away without providing for them, she is dead right and you are dead wrong. Then again, she could have made arrangements also.

It sounds like you two went three fourths of the right way and then stopped. Why?

Now you need to pay the price. Adopt some cats from a shelter. Adopt another feral colony, they are all around.. Join Alley Cats Allies.

Regarding Cleveland. Yes I am from there. West Tech High, Case-Western Reserve University, B.A., M.S. and BS. I could not wait to leave Cleveland.

You have spent 25 years traveling off and on the path. Get back on it now. Do not waste your life playing. Take whatever spiritual potential you have and make it work. Do not waver. Pick a direction and go. Be strong and be direct.

Ed's note.

I think readers may be confused over the differing advice I give different people. Here is the explanation.

I have been practicing every conceivable meditation, chanting, visualization, psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, and hanging around gurus trips, from very different traditions for 27 years before I attained the two stages of understanding. I wasted a lot of time traveling exciting paths that were dead ends or distractions. My main practice was always "Who Am I?" even from the

beginning. Secondly was the Kundalini thing and thirdly chanting. However, both Kundalin and chanting are long and torturous paths with many distractions and it is easy to get lost.

When someone asks me a question, I listen to where I think he/she is coming from and respond in a way I think most helpful for that person at that time. Like I said, I hated the single technique, 38 regular approach.

There are several ways to get to enlightenment.

The opening the Third Eye, the awakening the Kundalini approach, is quite exciting and provides positive feedback making one feel there is progress. In a sense there is progress. The mind opens up and the personal self disappears. The inner glow of pure consciousness reveals itself. One can then swim or surf in pure consciousness. There is no body, no world, no effort, no mind.

This pure consciousness is not still and silent, but a high degree of silence is necessary to become one with it. It is energetic and always moving and flowing. This is pure consciousness upon which a network of thoughts creates the world, body and finally the I-concept. The world and I take form out of the network of thought imposed on the ever flowing, no-object consciousness.

This network of thought is not a function of your brain, but a function of consciousness. You are not a body with a brain imposing a world on the Mind of God. The Mind of God is All and is you. The thought network creates an apparent reality of you separate from the world. In fact, you are the Mind of God.

The other approach is the "Who Am I?" question. It internalizes the apparent mind looking into emptiness for the source. The process splits the mind into the seeker and the ultimate sought, which is the source of consciousness. Soon there is nothing but pure inner space with a non-perceivable "looker." One is witnessing consciousness. At some point, as with the Third Eye opening, one realizes there is no I, and there is an explosion of sudden awakening. The split mind is unified.

The Kundalini approach works because the mind becomes more and more refined and transparent and no I is found. At some point the explosion of realization occurs.

With the "Who Am I?", at some point the conceiver realizes there is nothing but emptiness, the Mind of God, the great, lighted space of empty mind. One

concludes there no I, recognizes that I, is just a thought, a part of the network of thought. This conceiver is the split-off watcher; and the resolution of the "Who Am I?" question is a unified mind, and you, who are consciousness, floats freely, without boundaries in the unity mind or Mind of God.

This is the point I am trying to get people to.

The next step, transcending consciousness itself cannot be sought. Consciousness and the secondary web of thought cannot conceive of or achieve that which is before it, or, prior to consciousness. This can only be achieved when the mind becomes totally silent, which for me, occurred in the transition from sleep to waking. Both the sleep world and waking world are added to me, the Absolute. All Advaitin teachers talk about the transition between waking and sleeping as where realization most often occurs.

The sleep and waking worlds, as well as surfing, free-flowing consciousness, the Mind of God, is not the Absolute you. You are before and greater than even the mind of God.

This is the best conceptualization I can give of the process. Any conceptualization will lead you astray in the sense that unless you have had the experience and lived it for a while, you can only understand from your level of spiritual growth and the ideas attached to the path you travel, whether Zen Buddhism, Advaita or Shavism, and your own deepest spiritual experiences. You can never understand a teacher's teaching until you have attained enlightenment yourself. Then everything he or she ever told you becomes clear, translucent, and the biggest Eureka anyone can attain. This eureka shatters the mind unlike the little eureka's of mathematicians or physicists.

However, attaining enlightenment means nothing. You have always been the Absolute; you, as a separate self, or even as unified consciousness, just do not know it. Therefore, if you can get rid of the seeking bug, your are already cured of the disease of seeking, which is both a curse and a blessing, and you can be yourself in the apparent world, which is where even the greatest Avatar returns to.

Please understand this. It is far better to be loving and acting compassionately than attaining any kind of enlightenment. Acting compassionately is not just self-involvement as is self-seeking, but other-involvement, which also releases you from illusion as you walk in the totality of consciousness and will some day also attain--maybe.

Attaining enlightenment eventually results in the explosion of the loving, compassionate nature of consciousness in you, the Bodhisattva nature of pure consciousness. This is where you will go in the end. Why not start there?

I want to save you time. I don't want you to run out of time before either you attain enlightenment, or give it up to become a saint.

I hope this explanation helps some.

October 12, 2005

Dear Ed,

I discovered Robert's book a few months ago and then, not long after, your website. Robert's book has meant so much to me and it was with great joy that I found your website. Thank you! I have loved exploring every part of it -- the memories of Robert, your own journey, your concern about and love of animals (which I share, evidenced by my fur covered furniture!). I have found information in different parts of your website, including the "Stump the Guru" questions and answers, that have been very helpful, which leads me to a question . . . well, at least a sharing.

After years of self-inquiry (which for me has truly been the right path) about a year ago there was a spontaneous opening in which the words "the inside is the outside and the outside is the inside" came through and simultaneously a direct experience of the absence of "me". The sensation was that the internal space that had previously been occupied with "me" was somehow no longer there; instead there was just "Isness". The witness was still there observing with great wonder and awe (that sometimes would tip into a feel of hilarity) that somehow everything was all of a sudden different when nothing had changed!

Another part of the shift was that in meditation I kept feeling as if I was about to fall asleep even though I wasn't sleepy and sleepiness has never been an issue for me in meditation. It was like a brief period of "drifting off". (I did not know at the time about the importance of the period just before sleep and just after waking up.) This was accompanied by a strong energetic sensation in the body, mostly in the mid back, although sometimes it would spread. As this sensation became more and more part of my experience in meditation, I found that, to some extent, I could make it last a little longer by what I called "falling into it". It still didn't last very long but the more I could "fall into it" the more the energy would spread.

At some point (I can't remember the chronology) the sensation in meditation changed to something that, to myself, I described as the beginning of a sunrise - it was like the sun rising for a brief time only to stop rising. This lasted for months. Then, inexplicably, one day as I sat in meditation for an extended time, the body became more still than it seemed possible - there is no way I could will it to be that still - and there was the usual beginning of the feeling of sunrise but then the sun kept rising! The experience was one of utter stillness and peace. When I opened Robert's book and read his words

Daylight breaks

The mind is stilled
Silent, at peace
Movement nil.

I was stunned. That is exactly it!

What is happening now is an ever deepening fall into silence in meditation and an ever deepening willingness to turn attention to silence when in the world. There has recently been the wonderful discovery that in the world instead of trying to counter any thought deemed "not good" by a thought deemed "good," it is possible to turn attention to Silence, to the Mystery, to get off the back-and-forth of duality - that any concept is equally flawed - to be free of duality means not following any thought at all. The experience when this happens is like falling completely in love with It All, including my own humanness -- what I have labeled flaws, oddities, inconsistencies included!

There is a feeling of wanting to reach out and connect with you even though, now that all of these words have been expressed, I don't seem to have a specific question. You probably wouldn't believe me if I said I was a person (usually!) of few words. I appreciate the opportunity to be in communication with you.

In gratitude,

M.

October 13, 2005

Dear Patricia,

Things are unfolding for you in a perfect way. When the sleepiness comes, don't try to fall into it, you will fall into it all by itself which will allow you to come out on the "other side" as often as you want and often when you are not expecting it. Then not only will there be the knowledge you are not, along with the understanding there is no inside-outside or duality of any sort, you will directly experience no-boundary consciousness, and become the Mind of God.

You need no instruction from me or anyone else. You are doing fine. Go straight ahead.

Robert would have been very happy to know you.

Are you a student, faculty or staff?

Ed

October 13, 2005

Dear Ed,

Thanks for your reply. I am on the faculty at XXXXXXXX University. At times my job has felt totally incongruous with following my "spiritual path". Over the last few years I have felt like the pilot of a small plane watching as the plane loses altitude with the falling off of one part after another. Now, (flying just a few feet above ground!) I have simply let most of the worry go and I am doing what I want to do - be a good teacher - and not doing what, in truth, I simply can't do anymore, conduct research, write scholarly papers, etc. Until my next review, all is well (smile!). I have a sabbatical coming up in 2007 and want to spend the year at Arunachula. I need to come up with some sort of justification for being there but I am sure some idea will come. After that, I will see what life presents - I cannot imagine that I will be in academia much longer.

I am actually going to Arunachula in Feb. for 3 weeks (my first visit to India). I do not teach then and will use some of the time (although as little as possible) to investigate sabbatical possibilities. The draw to Arunachula is very strong - the iron filing to magnet image is pretty accurate. A few years back, after being introduced to Ramana, I began to pursue self-inquiry. It was the right fit from the start. At some point, I read something that Ramana had said that made it apparent to me that a more pointed effort would be useful so I began

to pursue self-inquiry with a new level of intensity. I was sitting in my bedroom one day during this time when, all of a sudden, I saw the emptiness that is what Is. Great terror arose and there was a spontaneous inward calling out to Him for help. He appeared and when I looked into his eyes the terror was instantly replaced by the most indescribable peace imaginable. I was sitting on the edge of my bed and when this occurred there was a feeling as if I was wearing a silk garment next to my skin that slid off of the body and pooled around me. It is hard to know what more to say because words fall so short but I share this event so close to this heart because I know you understand.

Patricia

October 13, 2005

Perfect!

I normally counsel people not to go to India because the sight of poverty and death is so striking, and India is only pro forma spiritual like Thailand is Buddhist in form only.

But with you it is different. I am happy that the process is unfolding so naturally and gently for you. Perhaps some day you will be a great teacher and save many people from suffering.

Say hello to Geneshan when you get there. He is Ramana's nephew and publisher of the Mountain Path.

Ed

October 13, 2005

You know, this heart does burst with compassion for all beings, including this being, who are trapped in an illusory world in which love exists only because there is an imagined condition of not love. My only wish is to break completely free of the illusion, to become the Mind of God. As Ramana said, "Let whatever is to be, come to be."

I am in a Department of Human Development which is my training. I must admit, I say this feeling little connection to it at all. My only connection is to my students but that connection has virtually nothing to do with the content of what I teach and everything to do with the opportunity to be in contact with these lovely young beings who, with a little encouragement, are very eager to engage with an adult who is interested in who they are, what they think, what they care about. These conversations quite frequently touch upon the very things you and I have talked about - a kernel is sometimes planted.

I would say that the process has unfolded naturally for me. There is an ever stronger feeling of simply being carried. I am not so sure about the process always being gentle, however. I have felt scoured, scraped, emptied, burning hot, barely able to function . . . but the tastes have been too big to turn from.

I hope I have the chance to meet Geneshan. If I do, I will say hi.

Patricia

October 19, 2005

Dear Ed,

There is a question that has been in the background for quite awhile that I would like to put out to you. It has been so persistent that it would be a relief to at least try to find the words to pose it.

One interpretation of the words, "the world does not exist," is that when one sees that the mind can only perceive conditionally - one thing must always be in relation to another - then it can be said that "the world does not exist as we think it exists." Consciousness is only One.

Similarly, the words "there is no birth and there is no death" can be understood to mean that when we are born consciousness animates these forms until these forms no longer contain this animation (death of the form). There is no birth and there is no death because that which has animated the form (consciousness) is unchanged by appearance in any particular form. There is only consciousness, only One.

But if one contemplates how form can arise from emptiness, how visible can arise from invisible, how movement can arise from stillness, the interpretation changes. What appears to be form/visible/movement (all in the play of consciousness) truly does not exist - is only illusion - nothing ever entered anything to create animation. What appears to be form is truly only emptiness - emptiness is all that is. Words become totally futile - silence is the only possible expression, expressing itself.

Thanks,

Patricia

October 20, 2005

Patricia,

You need to go beyond all three.

There is a fourth interpretation and I am sure a fifth, sixth, etc.

4. Neither form nor emptiness exist. Both are phenomena. Emptiness, as the absence of form, is still dependent on form as part of a duality.

Emptiness can also be described as phenomena directly. I perceive emptiness and stand in front of it in awe.

Anything in existence is added onto me, I am before all existence, any phenomena, any quality or lack of quality.

That which is before existence can never be known, conceived or have any qualities whatsoever, neither emptiness nor lack of emptiness, neither form nor lack of form (common description of emptiness.)

Ed

October 20, 2005

Dear Ed,

Can that which is before existence be "known" in deep silence?

Patricia,

October 20, 2005

No, it cannot be known. It is before knowledge. It can never be the object of knowledge or knowing. Knowing is superficial.

You can BE the absolute and from the position of the absolute see that everything, phenomena, emptiness, knowledge is added onto you, has nothing to do with you, and cannot touch you.

With that experience, you can walk away with the knowledge that you are not that, 'that' meaning everything that at any moment you thought yourself to be.

No matter how you try to understand this riddle, you cannot. You need to go beyond it and become the absolute. Then everything is "explained."

Ed

October 28, 2005

Dear Ed,

I was delighted to stumble upon your website. I didn't know such a thing existed.... I'm very grateful that you've taken the time and put in the effort to produce it. My name is Jason. I am 37 years old. I've been bedridden off and on for 11 years due to chronic health problems. (not that any of this matters... just "story-line") (smile).

I've been a "seeker" (boy, I've come to hate that term) for ten years or so.... after having experienced a three day "awakening" (for lack of a better term) and realization of Who I Am (more correctly, who I am NOT). It "SEEMED" to go away, and I've been "searching" ever since. It's been quite frustrating to say the least. I KNOW (because I experienced it) that I can't "lose" the reality of who and what I have always been.... but it seems to have been obscured again after those three days.

Anyway, this isn't about my life story. (smile) I've read just about everything out there in the "Advaita" world. (and it's a world that seems to get more crowded every day.... there are so many "teachers" now... it's all a confusing morass of concepts.... who to believe, what to practice, WHO is doing the practice (laugh), etc.) The one constant I have had in the past six years or so has been

Robert. My only "connection" with him has been through the two "Silence Of The Heart" books. There are other teachers I love (such as Ramana and Nisargadatta), and I read their words (along with a lot of "contemporary" teachers). But I keep coming back to Robert over and over. I have a deep "respect" for being such as Ramana and Nisargadatta. But with Robert it is different. I feel a HEART connection to him. Like I said, I respect the other teachers, but I feel like I "love" Robert (I don't know how else to phrase it). I've often heard it said that everyone has a teacher that is THEIR teacher and whom they resonate with. I feel, that for me, that teacher is Robert. It's a source of deep sadness to me that I was never able to meet him.

I contacted Pamela Wilson some years ago (without knowing that she had known Robert). She has been very kind to me over the years and last year I was able to meet her in Calgary (I live in Canada). Pamela always said that she was going to send me a picture of Robert.... but due to her busy schedule, she never got around to it. I was wondering if you had a scanned picture that you could send me of him? I've only seen a few pictures of him (I know he didn't want his picture in his books and things). Actually, until I saw your site, I had only ever seen ONE photo of him. (It was the one that is on the wall behind your cat Bodhi). I had that as the wallpaper on my computer for a couple of years, until my computer died and I was never able to find the photo on the net again. Pamela always said she was going to send me a photo of him smiling..... which he apparently didn't do a lot of..... she said that some of the photos out there made him look "mean and scary" (not her words.... but something to that effect) and that he really wasn't at all. (smile) So.... if you have any photos (especially the one behind Bodhi) that you could email me, I would greatly appreciate it. If not, I understand totally.

This letter to you is not about trying to "get" something. But it IS about expressing to you (someone who understands) how much Robert means to me and how happy I am to have found your website. I've only begun reading your site... but believe me, I will read it all. Thank you Ed for all the work you've done on behalf of bringing Robert's work to the world. It has changed my life and I never even met him. All I have is a REALLY worn out copy of Silence of The Heart with which to prove my devotion. If you have the time and inclination to write back, I'd love to hear from you. If not, thank you again and I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

Jason

October 29, 05

Dear Ed,

Sorry to write again so quickly. I hope I'm not bothering you. I've been reading your site and all I can say is WOW. I honestly thought I had read everything under the sun in the Advaita world and had heard it expressed in every conceivable way. Obviously, that is not the case. In reading "The First Awakening" section of your site, I found myself being blown away. Your "shower experience" is very close to what I experienced ten years ago, although mine was not quite as profound or all pervasive... and certainly (judging by the fact that I once again feel like an "I") not as long lasting. But it was the same in many, many ways. You do an absolutely amazing job of describing these things. Anyone who has read or written about this subject will attest to the fact that it is almost impossible to put these things into words. And of course, the words are not the thing, but I really appreciate your way of phrasing your experiences and insights.

I also, for the past couple of years especially, have found that I can't get or stay interested in anything. I used to be a singer/songwriter (and I guess I still am in a way) and used to love to read novels and watch movies. But in the last couple of years nothing seems to hold any "charge" or "interest" for me. I've tried to explain this to people close to me and the best I've been able to do is say that "nothing really has any IMPACT.... things just seem to slide by in my life without leaving much of a trace in memory or having much meaning". At first I thought that people had stopped producing interesting movies, books and TV shows. (laugh) Then I realized that that wasn't the case at all.... it was ME that had changed. I don't mean to claim that this is the same as what you experienced prior to your awakening experience, but there sure seems to be similarities. The most profound thing I've read on your site (and I'm still in the process of reading) is this statement..... "There is only One, and that One is not real". That is incredible!!!!!!! I've never heard it expressed like that before. So much of Advaita seems to imply that yes, "you" and the "world" and the "ego" and "thoughts" are not real..... BUT that there is a "something" (a God, or Presence or Oneness) that IS REAL and is "watching" the unrealness of the rest of it. So a "person" keeps looking for the Real in the midst of all the illusion. When you phrase it the way you do above, it pulls the rug out from underneath the whole thing. If even the great and venerable "One" is NOT real, it's pretty much "game over". (smile) Like I said, I hope I'm not bothering you. There just aren't a lot of people to talk to about things like this. I appreciate your "listening".

As I said previously, if you feel like writing back, that would be great. If not, I understand. By the same token, if you would rather me NOT write to you.... let me know.... no hard feelings.

Jason

October 30, 2005

Hi Jason,

Glad to meet you and read your beautiful letters.

I used to go with Robert when he picked up his mail at the Post Office in Canoga Park. He'd get letters from seekers all over the world.

Robert would sort through the mail looking for the personal letters from people like yourself. He did not just open the letter and read.

He was very texture-oriented. He'd run his fingers along the top of the envelop as if getting a feel for the writer's vibrations. Then he'd carefully peel back the envelop to expose the letter. Then he'd smell the letter. After that, I never knew what happened to the letter or how Robert would respond, except that he'd mention one or another at Satsang. Robert would usually dictate his answers to Mary Skene or another close disciple to respond.

Your letter had a curious "feel."

On one hand you seemed to express a sense of loss for your three-day enlightenment experience and at the same time, you did not want anything from me except a picture of Robert and to tell me, and perhaps through me, tell him by proxy, how much his teachings meant.

This shows a profound state of development.

The experience washed through and over you, but you got it. You attained the knowledge of what you are not. You know that anything that you experience, perceive, conceive, is not real and is not you. That knowledge is enlightenment; it does not require a constant dialogue of the sort, "I experience that I am not."

It does not matter whether the experience lasted a day, month, a year or was permanent. It happened, you got it, and things are and will continue to unfold

for you in a way you'll never understand and understanding is not necessary or desirable.

One of the greatest Zen Masters of all time was called Joshu. Joshu lived to be over 100. One day in a talk when he was in his seventies, when talking about enlightenment, he said that he had had 17 major Satori (enlightenment experiences) and thousands of minor ones.

It is so with most seekers; there are enlightenment experiences and enlightenment experiences. They go on. They progress; They seem to regress when actually they just change directions. Don't worry. You got it! You know you got it.

Robert spent a long time traveling up and down India to clear up doubts and deepen his understanding.

Nisargadatta also, in his final lectures, talks about a progressive forgetting about himself that was still going on almost 50 years after his awakening.

So never worry in this respect. You got it. I hope you understand this. Whatever is happening now is a natural unwinding or that which was wound. Nothing may seem to happen for a long time, then all of a sudden lots of things start happening.

I talk about my two-stage enlightenment because I had two experiences closely related in time with the same general conceptual frame, that is, Advaita/Buddhism. This is an arbitrary division. It could be a nine-stage or a no-stage process. It is just words, chattering, concepts.

The chattering within consciousness appears to create the world, the body, the self. Parts of the chattering die down for a while and "we" say we experienced there was no self. Another part dies down and we say the world is less exciting or boring. Even the concept of enlightenment is just a chattering within consciousness. All that there is, is this "talking" in the field of consciousness, which gives the appearance of a reality to no one at all. Its all very mysterious how it works.

However, more practically, do note that your chattering is dying down in many different areas in the same way Patricia talks about her experiences, and with it the ending of participation in large areas of the waking dream.

Take good care of yourself and of every person and creature who seeks your presence.

Ed

(Ed's Note: After you have your first Satori, one deep enough to know down the tiniest part of your being, that You Are Not, you might say that the lamp of enlightenment is on. Even if you go no further, you have escaped the terror of death. What you are cannot die. The body and mind die, but you are not that. Those things are added onto you. They do not touch you.

Then, after a few years (or a lifetime of deeping that understanding), you can rest. There is no more need to practice. You can just stop and the process will carry you along.

At this point you can stop, sit on a bench, watch the birds, play with your grandchildren and have no more concerns or obligations--if you want.

However, you, as an apparent entity, or what Balsekar calls the "mind-body apparatus" (I love that phrase because it says so much so awkwardly), can, so to speak, at that time, do God's work and help the world come to enlightenment, or at least try to make the world a better place. The Buddhists call this the Boddhisatva attitude: Knowledge of noumena and phenomena is endless, I vow to fathom it all; sentience beings are numberless, I vow to save them all, and two other vows I can't remember now. I reduce the latter to "I am my brother's keeper."

Those who do not turn to help others are called Arhats, perfectly enlightened, but finished with the world. These are the cold fish Robert speaks about. Their presence helps the world by their sheer existence in mysterious ways, and also provide an example that escape from birth and death is possible.

There is an eternal, post-enlightenment, resting place that you can dwell in even while in the most strenuous Boddhisatva activities. One is an Arhat, but also a Boddhisatva: enlightened and removed, yet compassionate and active.) This is where I invite seekers to go with me.

Robert was one who could sit on a bench all day. However, Thich Tien-An had that same sort of peacefulness, but could also prepare sermons, work in the temple garden all day, or spend the entire day painting a house or preparing the hottest soup one can imagine for the general temple lunch on Saturdays.

But know, no matter what your apparent pain and suffering, you are beyond all that. It is a trivial game you, as an apparent mortal, have been forced to play, which you can refuse to play, either by turning within and seeking your true self, or by having tasted enlightenment, knowing it is all a mirage, thereby transcending it.

November 3, 2005

Hi Ed,

This is Cedar again...I emailed you last week.... I was hoping to avoid a lengthy email but it seems unavoidable...I come from a family background (3 generations) of incest, violence, neglect, and poverty....so I have had to work hard to not be a totally messed up and a total dysfunctional person(this imaginary me could have lived in a constant nightmare)...when I say messed up I mean living a life that is unnecessarily difficult like being with a man who beats or torments me...and having very distorted views on this relative reality....(when I was 30 years old) I starting having spiritual experiences through my therapist (whom I didn't know was a transpersonal psychologist)my cells were melting....I felt myself go into altered states... etc... this lasted for a year of me having all of these experiences that I had no concept for at all... ..I had never had any interest in spiritual matters or no prior exposure to anything remotely mystical...anyway in a round about way it led me to a book about Ramana Marashi in a bookstore (I happenstance pick us book up while in a bookstore and instantly knew that he was responsible for all these experiences I had....it turns out that my transpersonal psychologist had visited Ramana's ashram several times) and another teacher named John DeRuiter in Canada...(have you heard of him???- ...I have absolute faith in Ramana but I don't have absolute faith in John...however I understand John's teachings)...I loved Ramana but I couldn't really make any mind sense of his teachings at the time....I have picture of him and I have every book I could find at the bookstore on him, but I couldn't even begin to do that self-inquiry (it was inscrutable)..... so I tried to do what John DeRuiter said to do from his tapes and books and I became very depressed to the point that I was suicidal...at this point, I decided that I was not balanced enough to do deep spiritual practices(when I say deep spiritual practices I mean dismantling the ego and the mind) on my own.... ... there are some things that I continued to do on my own such habitually surrendering but I don't aggressively try to dismantle my ego and mind on my own.....the thrust of this email is ...after reading and/or listening to Ramana, John DeRuiter, and Nisargadatta I felt that I if I do anything at all that wasn't actively dismantling the mind/ego or I was cheating and being disobedient.....so for the longest time I just didn't do anything at all like hatha yoga, meditate or

any "lesser practice"....however, I am a person that is fairly unbalanced from the start and lesser practices make me more balanced...so eventually I decided that it was better to be an unenlightened and calm, peaceful, more open, more compassionate than to be an unenlightened stressed, tensed, angry, withdrawn, short-tempered person(which is how I am if I am not doing one of these "lesser practices")..... I feel like their teaching is the advanced Calculus class and I am still in the Algebra classanyways I do read Nisargadatta, Ramana, and (recently I got Robert's book) daily...I love reading it but it doesn't necessarily help me with my tension and stress and unbalanced emotions like the other "lesser practices" do....when I do Hatha yoga I go into meditative states where I feel like a beam of light and I feel peaceful and healed...it is so nice to have a relief from the chaos, turmoil, and anguish my life has entailed... ..Ramana advised against hatha yoga so I didn't do it for years but when I started doing itit completely transformed my life from a mess to balance....so anyways I wrote this long irrelevant email because I want to know more about the meditation you call illumination...my yoga teacher does a type of illumination meditation with us in class and I can really feel my body light up...it is so lovely....if you can tell me more about it and/or where to find out about it please do....I have read your website exhaustively....and I love it ... thanks for your time, effort and patience.....CEDAR

November 4, 2005

Hi Cedar,

Thanks for the background. It helps me understand you better.

By all means continue to practice as you are with Hatha Yoga, therapy, etc. You are doing well to be reading Nisargadatta, Robert, etc.

Trust your instincts here.

Opening the Third Eye is described in several places on this site, mostly in the online Satsang section, but also in Practices. Some day I am going to have to make two guided meditation tapes on the Infinite Light of Consciousness, or Opening the Third Eye, and also on the microanalytic analysis of the phenomenal package we falsely believe to be ourselves.

A quick review: Turn your vision inward. It feels like crossing your eyes and looking within the head region. Look for any light. Concentrate on the light as much as you can.

Do not do it while laying down and going to sleep. I did that while laying down for a couple of days, and I could not sleep for a week. Preferrably do it in a good sitting posture. If you do it lying down, it becomes a habit and you remain awake and alert when you want to be sleeping.

As the light becomes steady, it will expand naturally. Gently push it downward through the neck, torso, gut, legs, etc., into the ground. The Kundalini experiences will get stronger at that time. You can go with them, or merely witness the process, and continue stretching the light downward into the ground and upwards above and around the head. The light will also expand outwards.

At some point the light will encompass everything. Then you will know that you illuminate all phenomena. Your inner light, the light of Consciousness, creates the world of physical light and form. When the light of consciousness becomes the primary focus of your attention, while the world and your body/mind are secondary, then you are on the verge of a great enlightenment experience; but still, it is not enlightenment. Even the light of consciousness is not you. You are before and greater than that.

Keep your eyes a little bit open when you meditate, otherwise you will begin to dream and sleep. You want to get under the dreaming deadness and sleep, and restrict sleeping until you lie down. Keep meditation and sleeping separate. At a point they will seem to be identical, but sleep happening in meditation is you getting before and beneath the mind. They are not the same but will feel the same unless you have a specific posture for meditation, such as a yoga posture or sitting upright with back straight.

This is more than enough to know at this point.

Good luck.

Ed

PS: If you want to find out someone who articulates this self-discovery of yours, read any of Ken Wilber's early books, such as the Atman Project or No-Boundaries. I talk a bit about this veiwpoint in my section called "Psychoanalysis." However, Ken's understanding is true only if you accept you are human. Ken's knowledge is from human point of view. However, the human point of view is pure fantasy. I am asking finally, as Nisargadatta asks, look at the world--and you--from the viewpoint of the Absolute. Then transpersonal

psychology is seen as just another set of concepts, or chattering, within the illusion.

November 4, 2005

"If you do not love animals, you will never go anywhere in spirituality. If you are getting anywhere, you will not eat them. It just works this way. It is a sign of refining consciousness."

You do know, that Nisargadatta used to eat meat, right?

Biont

So? Exceptions do not disprove general rules. Of course, if there are enough exceptions, one might have to revise the theory.

One might also note that Nisargadatta, at least the later one, was not notable for his compassion, as was, for example, Ramana or Robert.

Nisargadatta is wonderful for his razor like logic and powerful style, but he never made the turn into Boddhisatvahood. He remained an Arhat.

In my case, I ate meat sparingly, and with great guilt before my experiences. About a year later I stopped eating meat altogether. With that decision I felt I progressed five times faster. I felt light and existence felt effortless.

Ed

NOTICE--December 18, 2005

You noticed there has been no activity on this site as of late. The reason is the the Los Angeles animal welfare community has managed, with great difficulty and with a lot of civil unrest, gotten rid of the wicked witch general manager of Los Angeles Animal Services. The guy wasn't bad, he just did not have any animal experience and the incompetent staff, protected by civil service, got him down. The mayor had animal activists following his events all over the city. In any event, a new guy from NYC is coming in, Ed Boks. He has a good reputation and some success, so we are guardedly optimistic.

In the meantime, I have gotten a lot of letters, some to whom I have been able to respond and others not. I'd rather wait for a break in the crap happening here to do it right and give the writer my full attention.

Some of the letters are fantastic and I can hardly wait to share them.

January 2, 2006

New For January 2006

I have found two sites dedicated to the propagation of the teachings of Ranjit Maharaj and his teacher, who was also Nisargadatta's teacher. These are fantastic sites. The sadguru.us site has a collection of the most beautiful Bhajans as chanted by his students in an informal setting. The other site is sadguru.com in India. Both have long translations of Satsangs of Ranjit, as well as sell books by Nisargadatta and Ranjit. I cannot recommend any sites of greater value. When I read Ranjit's words, I just swooned in devotion to the long lineages of teachers who gave us this knowledge. Knowledge and devotion-awe merged. Some of the Bhajans are as moving as the Muktananda CDs that are so hard to find. Besides, these are free to download and were sung in the presence of the Guru.

Robert only started teaching when he could no longer work because of Parkinson's Disease. I had always thought it would be this way with me also. At some point, I would not be able to work and would be forced to make my life's passion, namely grasping the ultimate knowledge, the teachings of Advaita and Zen, my source of worldly support. The world would kick me out, so to speak. In fact, the process of constructing this site has kindled in me the desire to once again leave the world totally behind and absorb myself in teaching as I did as a Buddhist monk in the 1970s and later as a teacher at various University of California extensions and at the College of Buddhist Studies.

My line of work within the Grand Illusion is editing psychiatric evaluations, reviewing medical records to better understand a medical case, as well as rebutting reports written by defense psychiatrists. It can be a lot of fun, but requires a LOT of thinking and time wasted in words. Recent "reforms" in workers' comp are changing the face of forensic psychology in California, effectively destroying the safety net that Workers Compensation has provided injured workers since 1913. Basically, the insurance companies are not paying

claims, meaning doctors do not make money, meaning they don't need my services, meaning I need to do something else.

One of the reasons I have not taught before now is that making a living doing what I do is fantastically easy. Working 15 hours a week provides all the money I need.

Secondly, I just didn't feel like doing it. I have started Satsangs in the past, but it is extremely difficult to find students that want to hear true Advaita, let alone understand it. Then too, those who seek ultimate knowledge tend not to have a devotional bone in their bodies. Very few like chanting. Satsang without chanting is like a classroom. There is no spiritual energy, no love. I hate it.

Many years ago, as I write elsewhere on this site, I was named the First American International Teacher of Chogya Zen. Quite an honor. I spent several weeks visiting masters and temples. But when I returned to the US, I found the actual, day-to-day process of "building a practice" at a large Los Angeles Korean Buddhist temple was all too much marketing within a cultural setting. I just could not do it. The cultural Zen elements buried the clear teachings and teaching became pandering. Therefore, teaching did not happen then.

Robert is among the greatest I have ever known, and he never had more than 35-40 people coming to Satsang at a time. He never made more than \$1,100--\$1,200 a month from Satsang. Running a Satsang is exhausting. Meeting two or three times a week, preparing talks, as did he, and going to lunch and seeing all his students when they needed help, being on the phone with students all over the world, is exhausting. Robert didn't really like doing it. He shrank from it. I feel the same way. I don't like being in the spotlight of attention. I am really quite shy. Also, the pay is bad.

Therefore, I am going to change the face of this site, keeping a lot of the personal elements that led me to build it, but to place more emphasis on teaching meditation, chanting and other methods, as well as finding the highest quality texts, music and meditation aids so that I can become yet another spiritual shopkeeper: another Americanized Deepok Chopra. Maybe I will see aromatic holy sand from the sacred beaches of Santa Monica.

People tend to want objects more than knowledge, and knowledge more than realization. Therefore, all of my pandering will be to objects-people, and I can then spend my time teaching those with a strong desire to know the Absolute and who have the blessing of spiritual advancement to take the teachings.

Whether to take the next step of starting a local Satsang, that is a different matter. I don't know.

Keep those cards and letters poring in.

Late December to January 6--letters from Frank

Dear Ed,

Thank you for a wonderful site. Thank you for taking the time to respond. I sent that off last night and have only just taken the time to fully explore your site, and felt completely overwhelmed with tears. I was especially moved by the stories on your site and especially your compassionate and helpful responses.

This response is a personal story, but a bit long so if you do not respond or read this I do not mind.

I had only vaguely heard of Robert Adams before I came across your site. The only other teacher I have read to talk about the total non-existence of everything is Stephen Jourdain in his book *Radical Awakening*.

I find I am at a peculiar place in this life

My early background was in science before I did medicine. I took up psychiatry but took an instant distaste to it though I still persevered in it for four years. Finally I found psychotherapy more to my liking. However the mind/body dilemma was the centre of my intellectual focus. Finally I found someone an ex MIT professor of neurobiology by the name of Humberto Maturana whose explanation I found acceptable. It is not a common understanding it goes by the name of Autopoiesis Theory or the Biology of Cognition. Love is one of the central concepts. For some years I followed him around the world going to his lectures and tutorials. One of the key sayings or aphorisms is "The World, Language, and the Observer arise simultaneously and together." After years of gruelling intellectual effort I got it, intellectually that is, enough to explain it and give talks on it.

Then one day I was in a bookshop casually flicking through book picked up at random called "I Am That" by Nisargadatta Maharaj. I found almost the exact same statement. I was aghast when I found out that he came from a peasant background with no formal schooling. Most of that he wrote in the book was so clear even though I couldn't understand much of it.

That was the beginning of my search, entailing as it did trips to India reading avidly about everything spiritual and Advaita and following Andrew Cohen around the place for a few years. In the end I found this dissatisfying because he seemed to be so preoccupied with himself.

I was at a loose end after that until the beginning of 2002 when I came across a teacher on the net who ran an internet chat group. They held gatherings once a year to meet together. He was so like me in but he knew more than I did, and spoke of love in a way I had never heard before. Three months later my dear son, whom I loved more than anyone else died tragically in London. I felt as if someone had picked me up bodily and thrown me into the void. I disappeared completely for a while and was looked after totally at the gathering by a group of people (hitherto strangers) who showed me such love and compassion that I had never before known. I found that Love and Grief are two sides of the same coin and learned the enormous gulf that yawns between intellectual understanding and the living of life itself.

After a trip to Aranachula last year the group broke up, riven with internal conflicts, although I am still occasionally in touch with the teacher. I found that meditation happened to me, I did not have to do it.

I can sometimes see for miles with my patients as if looking over the whole of humanities pain feeling everything so deeply yet loving it so much but not being in it, removed from it.

Another thing has happened beyond me to fathom. I have had a female friend for years. We have always gotten on so well no problems at all. She is very quiet and lives a quiet life just an ordinary sort of person.

Over the last few months when I look at her and she looks back I feel myself disappearing, and I have to look away. She just smiles and keeps on looking at me. She says that she has noticed this too and thought we should just let it happen and not do anything about it.

I also found she has always had an interest in spirituality.

She says she has always so much love in her life.

I have no formal practices except for daily walks in the park.

I'll get Roberts book.

Many thanks Ed.

Frank

Thank you Frank for taking the time to write.

It is clear that not only are you a great Bhakta, but also have strong Jnana, a very good yet difficult balance.

Hopefully you will be rewarded with a great enlightenment.

Your practice appears to have taken on a life of its own. If you still need a teacher, he or she will come.

Regarding Language, the World and Observer, it is not as simple as simultaneous arising. Please read Nisargadatta's *Prior to Consciousness*; it is much deeper than *I Am That*.

Also, you will want to get hold of "Amrut Laya" by Nisargadatta's Dharma brother, Ranjit Maharaj. Ranjit is more traditional and not as incisive as Maharaj, but delves deeper into the theory.

Regarding the melting, it is a good bi-product of Bhakti and may lead to a more general merger with the entirety of your phenomenal universe; but despite its power, do not pay much attention, as it is still an external phenomenon and a distraction.

We both are alike in the sense of being psychologists, but I had to give it up because it only deals with the personal for most people, and only 1 out of 20 or so want to go deeper. It is hard to remain on the surface of language and image with non-deeply-spiritual people.

You may want better to associate with more spiritual people and provide psychotherapy with them and help them go deeper than the personal--if you are not doing so already.

Please continue writing.

Ed

Dear Ed,

This melting thing is so astonishing. This distraction is so apparent especially when my friend is such an attractive woman as well.

So easy to get distracted. I never knew she knew about this but she does. She just smiles.

But Ed, my family think I am going off my tree! And they are jealous.

I see love everywhere. Had this peculiar experience when I went to a restaurant with some friends and fell hopelessly in love with everyone there. Could see everything they were up to and just loved them. Man this is not just mental. I was turned on!

Nuthin to be done I spose?

I never ever thought that all the sage's poems and raptures were ever anything but allegorical and metaphorical.

Boy did I miss the boat there!

Thank God there is someone else there who knows about this stuff. Otherwise I would be totally lost

Probably am already anyway.

Love to you

Dear man.

Frank

This unity energy has grasped you strongly. You have no choice but to go with it and see where it takes you, distraction or not. The ecstasy of human love only last a few month to a couple of years. You will have changed and when you restart your practice you will be more mature and focused.

I am no one to give advice in this area as I was very frequently distracted in this way. It is hard to differentiate between sexual love and divine. In fact, both are illusion, but a fragrant one.

Ed

Dear Ed,

All along I had thought that the world of concepts and abstractions in which we think and live, was maya, leela.

And that being present to life as it happens was all there is and was the original state itself.

Just realised that that too, is leela.

Nowhere else to go now.

Frank

The Original State also does not exist.

Nothing exists, not even nothingness or the absence of nothingness.

Ed

Ed,

Guess I'll get back to chopping water and carrying wood.

Dear Ed,

Just want to say some things to you dear man.

But for the life of me I have no idea what to say.

Except undying gratitude.

Frank

Thanks Frank, you are very gracious. Please just continue to chop water.

No kidding. Keep me informed of what is going on.

Ed

Dear Ed

Just want to say some things to you dear man.

Oh Ed Man oh Man!

It is 3:00 a.m. here.

I was listening to a mantra and suddenly I seem to have been torn apart by such convulsions of rapture I seem to can hardly stand it.

My glasses have fogged up.

Man

Do you hear this?

That is all I want

To hear

So close, we are

Love Frank

Magnificent Frank!!

You have realized the bliss of chanting!!

This is truly the Ananda and love you have sought, in its strongest and most potent form. Go with it where it takes you. This is just the beginning. There are many, many experiences yet to come!!!

Ed

The following is from an Un-fan Zen student:

david876123 <david876123@btinternet.com> wrote:

Ed, i wonder if i could BEG you to stop writing about some zen masters the way you do. I'm thinking particularly about master maezumi and master seung sahn. I'm sure it's not intentional.....forgive me, but i feel you slander them

dreadfully. You seem to hold up your opinions as 'truth'. But can a mind mired in dualistic notions judge one that is not?

Please consider again the wisdom of master seung sahn when he told you you think far too much.

Gassho

david

I do not know what slander you talk about, nor would I be convinced to do anything from a "begging" letter that attacks me. My opinions and experiences of Seung Sahn are my own. He is a great teacher, just not mine.

If you have a different version of "truth" about either men, tell me about it. Tell me fact, not your opinion, which, it appears, you believe is not opinion, but truth.

Ed

Dear ed

I believe the point i made was obvious. I was inviting you to consider the foolishness of allowing *your* mind, which *your own words* show is mired in dualistic notions, commenting, *in public*, about the merits and demerits of *true* zen masters, whose words show that they are not constrained as you clearly are. I believe that your actions could influence people *away* from *true* teaching.

To me, this seems like the behaviour of one who wishes to set himself up as an authority and thinks that denigrating *real* teachers is a way to gain credibility. I find this truly lamentable.

Gassho

david

Hi David,

You do yourself a disfavor by idealizing "real masters." Even the greatest of them is no greater than you. They are nothing but your creation.

You also do yourself a disfavor to think that finding Seung Sahn or Maezumi to be human is denigration or slander.

Dear Ed,

In my earlier correspondence i merely pointed out the rather uncontroversial understanding (in zen terms anyway) that i don't believe a lesser consciousness can judge a higher. That is what you were doing.....your own words attest to the veracity of what i say! Now, if you want to quote the heart sutra to me, go ahead, as long as you know that you didn't embody it when you were evaluating (very publicly, i might add) those two realised masters.

In your other point, it was not their ordinariness as human beings i was denigrating, but YOUR criticism of them because they didn't conform to YOUR notions of what they SHOULD be like. *You*, therefore, were the one that was holding the assumption (albeit perhaps unconscious) that they should have been more than 'human', as you put it. Or else how could you criticise?

This is all rather obvious, surely.

gassho

david

Guess I won't be getting a Christmas card from david

January 10, 2006

Hi Ed - just came across your website.

Thank you for sharing all of that - especially the book written by Nisargadatta Maharaj.

May I check with you my understanding:

(1) I understand that awareness / consciousness is the closest that words can come to describe what we are. Many suggest that that consciousness is universal rather than personal. But that awareness / consciousness is related to a particular body / mind mechanism: - "my" awareness experiences different things from yours; awareness arises with a body / mind mechanism and disappears when that body / mind mechanism dies.

Consequently my understanding of the meaning of "universal consciousness" is that the underlying nature of that consciousness is the same. And that consciousness is the essence of the building blocks of manifestation (atoms, electrons - ultimately energy waves - or as Nisargadatta called them, the "five elements"), and manifestation cannot be without consciousness.

(2) Nisargadatta Maharaj talks of consciousness being time-bound and so also unreal; and ultimately if one "stabilises" in pure consciousness it will eventually lead you beyond consciousness. Is it possible to expand on that - or is it just beyond words?

Thank you.

All the best,

Ven

Hi Ven,

You could say this is true. But it certainly is not the final truth.

What you are has nothing to do with consciousness.

Consciousness lights up the world, creates the world and is the world. That is, it is all the 'stuff' out there, including the body. But it is also the inner stuff, the sense of I-AM, thinking, the inner sense of feeling, taste, touch, etc.

Consciousness itself, in any of its phases, objects or form, has nothing to do with you as the Absolute, your True self. That cannot be known. It is never an object to be viewed or discovered in awareness. You can know nothing of it. No quality, no taste, no vision, no awareness, no space, no time. All these are parts of consciousness.

Awakening occurs in the moment you see that nothing that happens in consciousness has anything to do with you. To make distinctions between pure consciousness and other kinds, is a mistake. These are concepts only. All of this discussion and techniques are only concepts, wind whipping through an illusion.

Mahraj's advice to stabilize in consciousness really means to stabilize in the sense of I, or I-ness. Personally, I think this a wonderful exercise, as is asking

"Who Am I?" Both get you to the source, although they feel like different techniques. He is giving you a tool to hang your hat on.

However, the link between dwelling or focusing on consciousness or the sense of I, is very complicated as there are levels of understanding that may or may not be revealed through this practice. The way Maharaj presents it, is in a cause-effect conjunction: do this and that will happen. Things are not that simple.

As powerful as he is, Nisargadatta should be absorbed, not listened to. Get what you can from his talks. If his practice advice seems reasonable to you and not too perplexing, do it. If not, don't. He is the guru, as was Robert to me. Drink him in, don't think him in.

Ed

January 10, 2006

Dear Ed

I am coming back to you because I have a question. I more often have dreams during which I am conscious meaning during the dream I can tell myself, oh this is a dream. What has started as well is that when I take a nap the body kind of falls into sleep but not my consciousness (mentally I am still there, somewhere in nowhere's-presence). Kind of difficult to explain, but the easisest way to say it is; I am falling into sleep (the body) but can keep holding the rope of consciousness.

Is all this another step towards no-mind land or what does it mean? As I have nobody to talk with about this experience, sorry to bother you with this story, hope you don't mind. And I wish you and all your cats merry christmas and lots of love for the new year.

Kind regards

Sven

January 10, 2006

Hi Sven,

This is a very good state. It is sometimes called lucid dreaming.

One becomes aware that the sleep state being observed, the phenomena, is not real. It is nearly mindstuff flowing out of an infinity of thought. That infinity of thought is also exactly the same as our everyday reality, or the waking dream.

Be aware that the dreamer is not touched by the dream. Be especially aware during the brief moments of transitioning from the sleeping dream to the waking dream, that neither touches "you." You, as the absolute, are not touched by either the dream world or the waking world.

However, you need to realize that lucid dreaming itself is still within the realm of consciousness, and it is that realm you must ultimately transcend. If you get caught by state of lucid dreaming, you fail to learn its lesson.

Good luck. Stay with this state if you can.

Ed

January 12, 06

Dear Ed,

Thanks for your answer.

Can i ask, if everything is unreal, an illusion that doesn't exist, and we have no choice in what we do, why is it necessary to do anything in the world, or to help others - or indeed to teach this understanding? If we are just an appearance in consciousness, isn't it irrelevant if we are suffering or unenlightened, etc

Doesn't this then imply that there is "someone" to be liberated, or helped in any other way?

Also, do you have any advice / recommendations for a seeker on the path? I have read all I can - Nisargadatta, Ramana, Krishnamurti, Osho, Poonjaji,

Balsekar, Robert Adams, some zen, etc etc. I think I understand as much as I can intellectually - and I am convinced that it is true. And I know I need to stop reading - but it is addictive! I'm gradually circling back to the first three in that list and trying to focus on just one book by each. And I try to remember that I do not exist during the day - but it is sometimes difficult when one gets caught up in work!

Any thoughts?

Thanks in advance,

Ven

Ven,

Exactly right! It is not necessary to do anything. Yet, you have no choice but to be in the seeker's pickle. Your central core illusion, as Balsekar calls it, the body-mind mechanism, will continue, even after enlightenment. However, then you will be free of its effects because the illusion will be exposed. The "you" you talk about disappears entirely. This is Moksha, blowing out of the I, enlightenment.

Keep reading Nisaragadatta. He is the clearest of all three. Krishnamurti is too much a distraction as his focus is entirely different. Focus on the single text: Prior to Consciousness by my second guru, Jean Dunn, a long time disciple of his. it took me 6 months to read it both the first time and the second. Each chapter smashed my mind. Perhaps you will have this same experience; perhaps not.

Also, read Robert's book, Silence of the Heart. It is far softer and more homey. Robert didn't have Nisargadatta's sharp edges. He was far more heart and even his Bhaktic expression was warmer and softer. He hits a different part of your beingness. It is strange that so many talking head types loved Robert because he was a Bhakti in his own way and all that the heads wanted was knowledge. Yet, in his presence, they forgot all that and just beamed in his presence.

Also, get chanting tapes form Shanti Mandir and maybe the Hari Krishna sect (ISCON). Listen to the chanting as much as you can. Don't stop reading if it grabs you. You can't go wrong reading either of them. Just add dwelling in the self as a conscious practice, try to find where the I-thought arises and listen to

sacred music. Sometimes the practices will fall away by themselves; sometimes you need a teacher in order to escape from practices. You can not know ahead of time.

In fact, the whole process of trying to become enlightened is an illusion. Yet, when it happens, the illusion exposes itself.

In my own opinion, following the "I" thought inward is not that helpful. Enlightenment is finding the I-Thought to be an illusion. Following it inward, in a way, makes the thought more real and concrete. The best is to read the sacred texts that scream the ultimate truth, listen to sacred music, and hang around great beings.

Ed

January 14, 2006

Hi Ed,

Dear Ed,

My body and personality is identified as "George", and I reside here in Albany, New York. What can I say? I discovered this website this past week and have thoroughly enjoyed learning about you, Robert, and my SELF. Up til this point, it feels as though life has just been pain. Back in about 1993, while living in Maryland I stumbled upon a book by Krishnamurti. It ruined my existence as a human being :-) I was naive enough to think life was going to get better and easier for me. The opposite happened. Everything fell apart. Misery and compulsiveness took hold.

The ego loved the new concepts it had aquired. Oh boy! Now I was really going to be a greta man, blah blah blah.... It has been dawning on me that I really have not understood a thing. Rather than getting depressed, I have had some moments of genuine laughter about it. Some fantasy was playing in the mind yesterday, it brought tears to my eyes and then I smiled, thinking "there it is again". The ego astounds me!! Its ability to morph itself into any conceptual framework is beyond comrehension :-) It is really coming down to this for me, when I am thinking, that is NOT IT. What is" it" then? Anything I think is NOT it.

Can I fully absorb this to the point where the thinking stops? Why does

thinking continue even though it seems absurd? Is the aim to stop thinking or only see thinking return to its proper place in the larger scheme? Is it possible to be at peace while a stream of thought is passing before me? or, is this just a first stage in spiritual growth? Is there a time when the thinking really stops completely?

I have been listening to some Echart Tolle lately and some of his words have been sinking in. For example, I have discovered that I have been trapped in my head for years. I forgot about my body. I was only "conscious" in my head, at least partially, whatever that means.. When he says "Be present" it has an effect on me. The simplicity of it for some reason turned on some light bulbs. I have been struggling with compulsive behavior for a very long time and it seems to manifest as craving in my lower abdomen and chest, as if there is something trapped. The behavior temporarily "satisfies" the craving, only to see it return. It has been a vicious cycle. I have been stuck!! All of my spiritual readings have done nothing to end it. Who wants it to end?

I struggled also with the morality of it all. I felt like I was doing something wrong and "should" stop. But I was not stopping. I now realize that stopping has nothing to do with morality. It has to do with my peace, or lack thereof. I want happiness but am not bringing to myself through this behavior. In fact the behavior is preventing me from moving on. It started when I was a young boy and became deeply rooted. It was the only thing that brought me relief from my agony. The behavior itself is not important. It is the purpose it serves - numbing pain. I have been escaping for years, unable to just look at it and feel it totally.

What is this craving? As I just let it be yesterday morning upon waking, it transformed into a peaceful flowing "feeling" throughout my body. I smiled. Was this an illusion? It was as if something unlocked the cage or removed the pressure stuck in the mid section. When the pressure was released the sense of craving was gone(except this time it happened without acting compulsively). It then passed and the craving has again returned, but not with as much intensity.

Anyway, I don't know if this made any sense or if I am being clear. I fully relate to the feeling of not wanting to work and be a part in this worldly madness. I left a career as a broadcaster 3 years ago and now work as a chauffeur. The long drives give me plenty of time to be reflective, although it can also get very tiring and tedious. I'm now 38 and assuming I live a "normal life span", I'm not sure what I will do on

this planet. It is just great to know that there are great souls "out there". It gives me the strength I need to just take the step I am on. Does the day come when the steps are gone? Are there any steps at all except this one?

Thank you, Ed

Your friend in New York

George

January 14, 2006

George,

You remind me of me in days gone past.

All the thoughts and states you are going through I went through. You are burning with your seeking. That is good.

You need a teacher. First a Zen teacher to teach discipline and then your true teacher whomever that will be. I am sure there are good teachers in N.Y. Kapleau is no longer alive but I am sure he has good teachers there. Seung Sahn's centers are everywhere.

Go find a teacher who will guide you day by day. This can do nothing but help you.

Keep me informed. There are no answers to your questions because your questions will continue indefinitely until you are enlightened. Any answer would be stop-gap.

If you find someone as a teacher, let me know what he is like. Stay away from women teachers as they will distract you too much and you are already too distracted.

Read Prior to Consciousness by Nisargadatta until you find a teacher.

Keep me informed.

Ed

January 15, 2006

Ed,

Thank you for your kind reply and concern. This search is so strange. My first "teacher", Krishnamurti (one I never met, I only know him through readings and video), said that no guru was necessary. When I first started reading him, something in my heart said that he was not just a regular human being, there was something he was saying that hit me deeper than I had ever been hit. How did I recognize something in him that I felt I did not have? How weird! Up to that point I had gone to churches and flat out rejected everything I had heard. I could not "prove" it was wrong. I just knew in my heart. I also had been inundated with psychotherapeutic gibberish and 12 steps to nowhere.

Now comes along this other man that I admire, Ed, and he tells me I need a teacher :-). He may be right but somehow I'm not sure I "need" a teacher. To be honest, it has been something I have hoped for at times but all of the teachers I have admired most are dead - Krishnamurti (even if I asked him to be my guru he would have flat out refused), Ramana, and even Robert. Frankly, I think you would be a great teacher but I'm here on the east coast so it is not very practical. I'm going to fish around based on your guidance. It will only work if I trust a person in my heart. If not, I will not stay with him. It certainly can not hurt to find some good people to be around. Good advice by the way on staying clear of woman teachers :-). I was one step ahead of you on that one :-).

This evening, I purchased the Heart of Awareness. I will order prior to Consciousness.

From what I have read of Krishnamurti and Ramana's lives, it appears as if they lived what they taught. Of course, I never met them personally so I could never feel that presence directly. I'm sure they had some quirks. One thing bugged me about Nisargadatta. His abruptness seems a bit odd but there seems to be some serious inconsistency. In a certain conversation he told a student to give up his addictions. What about his addiction to nicotine? If he has transcended the desires of the body, then why the habit? I believe his answer went something like this. I am paraphrasing. "The addictions are of the body. They are not mine". Is this not a duality. A "Free Self" and an addicted body mind!

I guess it just bugs me that he remained a chain smoker. I know Robert said that an enlightened person would not hold onto a drug habit. That feels right to me in my heart, just as my own habit feels wrong in my heart - not wrong

morally, but wrong in the sense that it is slowing my progress. Perhaps the habit itself is not the primary issue but the entire ego complex that it is part of. The desire for the habit to go away is yet another desire. As long as I keep thinking about - for it or against it - the complex stays in place. Perhaps a good teacher can point me in the right direction as to meeting this challenge without escaping from it. For all I know, it will never arise again. In fact today was very peaceful. I was alone all day and felt very happy to just be as I am. There was very little wanting or needing of anything. One of the secrets is to not think about it when it is not there. This is one thing I was struggling with, always worrying when it was going to come bite me again. This seems to be diminishing as the error in that thought is being burned away by just being present, in the moment. I AM!!! That is it.

Thank you again, Ed, I will start looking around and will let you know if anything happens - even though, in reality nothing happens, right? :-)

George

George,

Yes, nothing happens. I suggested a teacher because your thought structure and questioning is not focused.

Don't worry about Nisargadatta's addictions or what Robert said. You are not enlightened yet, so don't worry about a post-enlightenment understanding. Take step one before worrying about two or three.

You have to realize that generally a teacher's broad statements are to the middle denominator in the audience. Sometimes he answers questions from a far more advanced student. The teacher is providing an appropriate answer for the level of questioner and will vary, just as Newtonian physics and Einsteinian vary.

A teacher will focus it as you will concentrate on his teaching being true or false, not X, Y, and Z and how they are the same or different. Ask many questions, see if the answers gel for you. Nothing any teacher tells you is the truth--only concepts.

Time after time students would come to Satsang and asked questions about what Ramana meant about X,Y,Z, and how that different from Rajneesh, or some such. Back then Nisargadatta was not popular. He would best try to answer the question, but often the questioner was persistent. He had a sticking

point, an intellectual doubt and Robert would gradually teach that the question's strength is only mind stuff and you have to go deeper than mind.

It will be extremely rare for you to find a good teacher from the get go. Go until you find one you trust, at least a little. Tell me about him. I will tell you whether he is true or a phony and by that, I mean not advanced.

Ed

Ed,

Which is first, the chicken or the egg?

Here is a blip from Ramana:

"Self can be without ego, but the ego can not be without the self. Egos are like bubbles in the ocean. Impurities and worldly attachments affect only the ego; the Self remains pure and unaffected. When the individual goes, the desires also go."

I assume this means ALL DESIRES - even the desire to be enlightened or achieve happiness, or whatever. As the ego grabs onto the above concept, it says "ok, now I must go so that I can be the Self, balh blah blah". This is still ego, nothing has happened at all. It is more ego spouting. or it says "I must let ago of all my desires so I can get enlightened....". More ego, or "I must not think about letting go of my desires because then I am just desiring the end of desire....." More ego!! Or, "I must go to a Zen monastery to discipline myself to let go of desire.....then I can gain happiness and enlightenment, after years of brutality..." False!! Ego!! It is another direction of the same entity. These are all thoughts, nothing more.

Who or what sees all of this taking place?

Does the individual go first, then the desires? Or is it simultaneous? Obviously, it is simultaneous. Then why make any effort at all to stop desire? Does it take effort to be the watcher? What makes the effort? The ego right? Then if this is observed, who is observing the effort of the ego? The effort is the ego.

Is this a joke? I've been at this for years and this is where I am - nowhere!! :-) Why would I have to get a teacher or go to a monastery? For what? Am I not the self here and will become the self in some Zen

combat? if I walk through sub zero temperatures barefoot, will I gain what I am?

Upon reading your experiences, I was clearly not going to follow that path. Maybe this was a tactic you applied to "test" my alertness, I don't know, or maybe you really see me as a beginner who needs help, I don't know. What can I know other than my presence and existence? This guy named Ed has appeared in my consciousness. Am I just playing with words here or have I comprehended something deeply? Who is asking this question?

Who is it that lacks discipline? What is discipline? Is discipline living in a pattern? Is it following authority? Is it brutalizing the body with postures?

Even these profound meditations you had as a Zen monk vanished. Did they build strength? Who went from weakness to strength? The mind?

Is this all a game I play? This seems absurd. Can anything the mind says be trusted? Even when it poses itself as a wise man trying to help me? It is weird how I actually get sucked back into identification with my problems. Who's problems? Who is identified with what?

For a while last night I was very worried. I was going to have to take a long and difficult path through teachers and zen monks to reach my goal. Why did I ask for any advice? is that not already an admission that I am a little pea in a pod?

Yes, the body and mind have problems, attachments. Sometimes there is severe identification, then suddenly clarity will come in the midst of madness.

If a teacher appears then so be it. Effort to make it happen just doesn't feel right to me this morning. It feels like another distraction on top of the one's I already have.

Maybe we will have a back and forth about this. I will certainly listen to anything you say. I'm not being belligerent, really. It is strange how I walked into a situation and now I am wondering what I was looking for in the first place.

You know this is no personal attack. I really enjoy reading your

material and have no clue whether you are "enlightened" or not. That does not matter in the final analysis. It will keep falling back on me to live as I see fit. If our conversations are part of that, then so be it. if this fades away, then so be it.

Thank you for your patience, Ed.

George

January 17, 2006

George,

I do not assume you are a beginner, but it is quite obvious the torrent of question means you have no focus. Everything is doubted. This is good, but...

In philosophy there is the hypothetical mule (called the "Logical Ass) who thinks about everything--all sides so to speak--and then does nothing, because thinking of all alternatives leaves no room for action.

As Seung Sahn would say, you think too much. You need no-thinking mind. Do you believe that? You must get before thought in your everyday consciousness.

How to do this?

Two ways: sink deeply within, such as following the I-thought to the source, or finding a teacher to butt heads against.

No matter; you must see that where you are is no good. You have to make an action. You are stuck.

When I say in my Zen section at some point you must get serious about what all this searching, God, the Absolute, etc., mean, I mean to be serious, you must be able to follow one question deeply, not 100 questions shallowly.

You have so much thinking and questioning that you get distracted before you can go deep.

Settle down. Relax, go within, or find a teacher you can argue with. I always did, no problem. But I only got somewhere after I stopped arguing with Robert after spending 4 years together. Before that, I had 25 years of questioning teachers and getting nowhere.

I am not asking you to repeat my mistakes. Maybe you should do to a Zen center in Fiji instead of a frigid mountain. But in Krishnamurti you found support for your endless doubt. What worked for him is poisoning you. Each person is different. There are no perfect 38 regular teachings or practices.

How to break through that doubt and become completely confident? This is a different question than you are asking. You are asking outside questions when you need to ask inside questions.

Do as you will, but making an effort to break out is as good as making an effort to go within. But now you are stuck.

Flip a coin: seek without or seek within, but move.

Ed

January 18, 2006

Ed,

I do not know what came over me. The torent was like a child having a temper tantrum. I feel embarrassed.

Anyway, when I was not able to hear sanity from within, I was able to hear it from without.

George

Don't feel embarrassed. It is quite good you could catch yourself.

Very good.

There are many pseudo-teachers who would give the interpretation that the ego is trying to preserve itself. But this theory adds no knowledge. It means nothing. Ego, mind, practice, are all concepts.

Just know you caught the distraction.

Ed

I must apologize regarding the chaos that is this call and response section. I am getting quite a few letters, and usually in the form of several back and forth letters in an email. It is difficult to separate the questioning letter with my response given the date of your letters and my responses and the dates of the emails. Therefore, I am sure there are redundancies as well as answer to questions that have not been asked so far as readers are concerned.

January 17, 06

Dear Edward,

I want to thank you for your website. It makes me feel, I'm on the right track. But this track seems so long and I'm so exhausted ...

(English isn't my mothertongue, but I hope you can understand me.)

My name is Mathias and I'm 25 years old now. Maybe this seems to young to feel exhausted from searching, but this "searching for the truth" never was only a hobby - it is my life. I was 11 years old when I "accidentally" opened a book about philosophy. Wondering why there is something instead of nothing and asking questions about life and death began even earlier. At this young age reading and asking questions about such things was mostly fun, but later it became more and more serious. With the age of 14 years I received my first book about buddhism. I was deeply impressed. I wanted to know more about that, because deep inside me I felt that this is my way. Now I own hundreds of books, booklets and articles about buddhism and advaita-vedanta. Most of the time (for years) I was reading and thinking about these things only to answer my questions at an intellectual level. But then (maybe very late) I noticed that such an intellectual understanding is not enough and that I won't come to an end with trying to understand at an intellectual level. It gives no peace to me and there are always doubts because this understanding has no base in my own experience. It's only words to me -

very interesting words, but only words. I wanted to know the truth behind the words, so I tried to meditate, at first breathwatching and then "body sweeping" (vipassana meditation). Maybe I was too impatient, but short after I begun I had the feeling that these methods are wrong for me and that I was looking in the wrong direction. Later I asked myself "Who am I?", but I did it the wrong way I think, because it was too formal and the "answer" came in form of intellectual knowledge like "There is no I anyway, so this question is missing the point" or the answer came in form of doubts like "I don't know if there is really an I, so I can't answer this question". Because of that I don't use "special techniques" any longer. I try to simply observe myself. With "myself" I mean the person "Mathias" - the only "I" I know. I discovered what Douglas E. Harding calls "headlessness" and that I'm playing "the face game" all the time. I can't see my own eyes. If I move the arrow of attention 180 degrees around, so that I look inward instead of outward, then there is nothing to see there. No eyes, no face, no head. Absolutely nothing. There is only a "void" so to speak that "contains" all the perceived things. Although there is nothing to see if I move the attention inward, it SEEMS that there is someone in there. It's "Mathias". It was not easy to detect, because it's nearly transparent. But it's there all the time. It is an image of "myself", of my body, especially of my head and my face. I can't SEE my face, but this image of my face is there. When I speak, laugh etc. then at the same time there is this image "speaking" and "laughing". Because of this nearly transparent self-image it seems that there is someone in there who is observing and doing all these things. I don't know how to describe it better. Sometimes when I wake up from deep (dreamless) sleep this self-image is not there or it is there but seems not to be me but only an image. No one is there at this time. Then a strong fear arises or even panic and "Mathias" is back again. Even if I'm awake it seems that sometimes (for a split second) this self-image is seen through or want to vanish. It scares me to death

everytime. But I can't stop looking inward. I want to know for myself.

I never had a normal life and I never really wanted to lead such a life. I was always full of fear and most of the time I feel bad. I was in therapy for years because of an "anxiety-disorder" and "depressions" but to me it was clear that my problem cannot be solved this way. Maybe my mind is ill, but I don't care any longer. That is the way it is. I don't feel strong enough to fight against outer circumstances and against my "personality". I was doing this for years and it was useless and exhaustive. I don't like it to be anxious and depressed but these feelings are stronger than my attempts to get rid of them and I feel better when I don't "touch" (fight) them all the time. I know them. That's enough for me at the moment. I feel a connection between "being anxious/depressed" and "not being enlightened". This is the "persons life". Maybe there is a life WITH the (anxious and depressed) person "Mathias" (self-image) after "enlightenment", but I don't want this life "AS" this person going on any longer.

I'm sorry for writing you so much text. But this is what I wanted to say. I want to share my experiences with someone who is awake. Maybe you can say me what do you think or feel about it. Do you have an advice for me?

I thank you very much for reading this letter. I would be happy, if you find the time to answer me.

Mathias

January 18, 2006

Mathias,

I am shocked. Your story is almost identical to mine. I read "In the Woods of God Realization" at age 11, and my first Buddhism book, Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation at age 13 or 14.

Your practice is perfect. Perfect!

Depression and anxiety are of the mind, it can continue long after enlightenment. But you are not the mind and you will realize it. Depression does not touch you.

Much of the anxiety you fear is regarding your sense that you will realize no one is there. There is no one in control to protect the personal "you."

Does staring into the Void fill you with awe?

Read Nisargadatta's Prior to Consciousness by Jean Dunn. Just that one for a while. It is his deepest book.

If you don't get much from that, read my own teacher's "Silence of the Heart" which is more Bhakta oriented.

Listen to sacred music, it will fill the Void with bliss making the automatic movement less taxing and more joyful

Most chanting tapes are crap: too Indian.

Get some from Shanti Mandir, teh Hari Krishna's or Self realization Fellowship.

I do not know your life circumstances. If you are not already leading the life of a wandering monk or Sadhu, think about doing so.

You are very advanced and will have a great enlightenment. It may be a week away or ten years. I was in your state for at least ten years before realization.

If it is in you, you may become a great teacher some day. Go for it.

I will help as much as I can. But do the music.

Where do you live? What do you do?

Love,

Ed

Dear Edward,

I ordered "Silence of the Heart" some days ago when I discovered your website and "Prior to Consciousness" after your advice yesterday. I will look for the music too.

Sometimes it is not easy to find the right words, especially in English. I don't know how to say what I want to say in the right words. But I will try it, even it sounds terrible.

Yesterday, when I read your answer I was a little bit shocked too. I was happy about your fast answering and happy to read that my practice is OK. I do what seems natural to me. But last night I couldn't sleep at first because I had to think about your words, that I "will realize". At this moment a strong fear arised. I had trouble to breath in a normal way. It seemed to me that the automatic breathing mechanism wants to stop and that I had to breath in/out intentionally in order to stay alive. After some minutes it was over and I wondered (like always) about my fear.

You asked me if staring into the void fill me with awe. Yes, sometimes. But most of the time looking inward feels somewhat "dry". There is the desire to look inward but it seems that this selfimage is blocking the "view". If I turn the arrow of attention 180 degrees around, nothing is to SEE but at the same time it seems as if there is someone in there. It is like "seeing" my own face from inside. It's not really a seeing, because I can't SEE my own face. It's an image of my face made from thoughts, from memories about my reflection in the mirror and photos of me. This inner selfimage is so close to "me" and so transparent that I can't perceive it as an "object" for long. And then it seems as if the person "Mathias" tries to look inward. Even if I realize that this is only an image it seems that this image is "me". The

sense of touch is strongly involved in this selfimage too. It seems that I can feel my face and my head AS face and AS head but this is only part of the image. What is felt as "head" and "eyes" appears like a "backstop" when I'm looking inward. It seems like the "looking" or "viewing" is attached to this imagined "head" and therefore it seems that "I" am looking with and AS that body. It's not easy to describe.

I'm not leading the life of a wandering monk or Sadhu, but sometimes I think about doing so. I live in Germany and work in an office. I hate it, but I don't know what to do at the moment. Most of the time I feel unable to go to work and to talk to other people. It is unthinkable for me to lead such a life for long. I'm not made from stone and sometimes I really miss other people but I want to be alone most of the time.

I will think about an anti depressant medication. Until now I refused it. But maybe this was wrong.

Thank you!

Mathias

What you describe, I have never experienced. I had a similar one, for years, wherein with 180 degree inwards, I'd see a dark and awesome inner Void, the absolute rock core of immovable presence. It felt like me and some far greater than me at the same time.

With enlightenment, the sense of a separate presence left.

you have strong family ties?

It would be helpful not to be alone in doing all this. Even if you do not have a teacher, go to a Satsang in your area where you can chant and meet with like-minded people. This helps some, but not a lot. Generally Satsangees are not too open with their experiences.

Keep in touch.

Sorry about taking so long to get back to you. It is chaos here with deadlines.

My website will be changing everyday.

It is going somewhere, but I do not know yet where.

I believe what you are experiencing is due to the intensity of your practice and I would say to keep on doing exactly as you are doing.

Do you also have afternoon involuntary periods when the mind automatically turns inward?

Where in Germany do you live?

What do you do?

Love,

Ed

January 26, 2006

Tess my granddaughter aged 4. We went to the park. She got on the see saw. She said. Hey Poppa the whole world is rocking, the trees are rocking, the grass is rocking everything is rocking. Smiles of laughter on her face. Then we went to the slide. She said Poppa the whole world is sliding, the trees are sliding the grass is sliding. Same with the swing. Then she put her shoes on. Looked at me and said. Poppa. You know the world is putting its shoes on too. How did we ever forget?

Love Tony

Dear Ed

I like the new style of your website and your "face to face". Congrats. You are very clear comparing to others which are not.

I am a bit in an odd situation or my mind wants to tell me that this should be the case. I'm practicing Kyudo which really leads me into a no-mind state and I enjoy doing it twice a week with a small group of people and a teacher

being capable seeing the matrix. For my body-mind apparatus it is also much more comfortable than Zazen. But odd is, that deep under, my heart is attached to Advaita Vedanta and their style of teaching like what Nisargadatta and Robert did. When I read "Silence of the Heart" for the 2nd time, I knew that the close relation I have with this is beyond words. In the book Robert says that fastest way to proceed is, Self-Inquiry (which I daily do), being with a saint and sitting in satsang. Unfortunately we seem not to have any Satsang activity in this country I am living. So I just continue my Kyudo practice and sit alone daily for myself whenever time allows it. The worse is when you would like "to sit in silence" with others but you can't because there is no such activity here.... Is there any difference whether I sit alone or does it have to be in a group? In a long time perspective? I have given up reading books about Vedanta because "finally it is all the same". Robert's books is the only one left which I occasionally read a few sentences. After this book, to me there is absolutely nothing more to be said because it is all so clear, no more words nothing more at all, just silence. Just continue Kyudo and sit alone?

all the best and thank you for your being there

Sven

January 22 (22), 2006

Hi Sven,

Glad to hear about your excellent progress. Don't worry, we all have doubts up until you get very close to awakening.

I do not know what Kyudo is. If it leads you to a truly no mind state, it is an excellent practice, although I still prefer just sitting in silence and doing nothing in terms of practicing. This is called Shikantaza in Zen and Mahamudra in Tibetan Buddhism.

Sitting in a group is far more powerful. It adds group energy.

That you have stopped reading is very good, although the desire to read almost always returns, even after awakening. Robert was always reading books by saints and sages.

I wish I could be there to help you. If you have a group we could do a very expensive telephone Satsang.

I do think there is a way to set up Internet conversations if there is a high-speed connection at both ends, such as the DSL I have. This, of course, costs nothing in addition to the equipment.

It is important to have chanting. I have re-written my "Practices" section. A lot is there.

What country are you in? Sven sounds Swedish, but I think you mentioned being in the Netherlands.

Ed

Dear Mathias

What you describe, I have never experienced. I had a similar one, for years, wherein with 180 degree inwards, I'd see a dark and awesome inner Void, the absolute rock core of immovable presence. It felt like me and some far greater than me at the same time.

With enlightenment, the sense of a separate presence left.

I believe what you are experiencing is due to the intensity of your practice and I would say to keep on doing exactly as you are doing.

Do you also have afternoon involuntary periods when the mind automatically turns inward?

Where in Germany do you live?

What do you do?

Do you have strong family ties?

It would be helpful not to be alone in doing all this. Even if you do not have a teacher, go to a Satsang in your area where you can chant and meet with like-minded people. This helps some, but not a lot. Generally Satsangees are not too open with their experiences.

Keep in touch.

Sorry about taking so long to get back to you. It is chaos here with deadlines.

My website will be changing everyday.

It is going somewhere, but I do not know yet where.

Love,

Ed

January 29, 2006

Ed looks as if I might be in the US in the near future. Sanfrancisco, Ashland Wisconsin and Indiana probably.

Would like to meet.

Love,

Tony

Glad to. Looking forward to meeting you too.

January 29, 2006

Ed Man my man.

Oh man.

You speak so eloquently of Jean Dunn. One of Nisargatta's devoted one's.

Have some books of her's I do.

Here's the thing.

Another present at his (Nisargatta's) satsangs was Jeff Massons Mother.

Jeff was Professor of Sanskrit at Harvard. Then did his psychanalytic training at Toronto University. Got to see that Freud was about facing regards to sexual abuse.

Wrote a book called "My Father's Guru".

Nailed Dr. Paul Brunton he did to the wall with that one.

Then was repudiated by the psychoanalytic community and he came to settle in NZ

Where I met with him and his mother through an extraordinary set of circumstances.

Oh man

Love you I do

Tony

January 28, 2006

Respected Sir,

Three days back I read Roberts' book, Silence of the Heart and the very next day I came across your website in Google. I don't think this was coincidence . I would like to thank you very much for your website and writings.

I am from India and am a Kriya Yogi with an interest in Advaita.

I have been studying - Be as you are , I am That and Silence of the Heart for past few months.

I would like to ask you some doubts and would be grateful if you can answer them -

How should we proceed further with the study Robert's teachings.

Do you have anything more to share regarding his elucidation of the technique of atma vichara.

Thank you

Rishikesh

January 29

Hi Rishikesh,

Please tell me a little about yourself and the Kriya Yoga you practice. This helps me understand where you are at to best answer your questions.

I have only love and respect for someone who devotes his life to knowing God or Absolute knowledge.

I was initiated into Kriya Yoga in about 1956 or 57 by a disciple of Pamamhansa Yogananda. It is so long ago I barely remember.

Is it not a purification form? Or, is it more a branch of Raja Yoga, as Yogananda, I believe, was a Raja yogi.

Robert too was initiated into Yogananda's lineage when he was very young, maybe 16. I think it is called the Giri order.

Love,

Ed

February 1, 2006

Respected Sir,

I am terribly sorry for taking time to answer your reply. Reason is , that email problem was actually on my side. I have been trying to migrate to another email service.

I am 28 yrs old based here in India, Bombay. I am a doctor and unmarried.

Actually I was trying to frame my doubts properly. I was around 16-17 yrs old when I came across Yogananda Autobiography and Bhagawan's biography by Arthur Osborne. A few years later I tried practising Advaita but entirely on my own with few written books and without any guidance.

I was told that Yoga might be a better option to develop concentration initially. I always thought that Advaita would be my final goal at later stages of my life.

I received initiation into Kriya Yoga in 2003 , my Guru was from a traditional kriya lineage of Sri Panchanon Bhattacharya , a disciple of Sri Lahiri Mahasaya.He has since passed on. Kriya Yoga is basically a Kundalini meditation technique. We are required to chant OM at each chakra moving up while breathing in and moving down while breathing out.

I also go to a place which is somewhat similar to Baba Muktananda once in a week. My mother is a follower of this place. We are required to chant Om Namaha Shivaya once a day for 10-15 mins. It is derived Siddharudhswami where Muktananda lived early years of his life.

Interertingly around that time I came across 'Be as you are' and Nisargadatta Maharaj, so that has lead to some confusion.

I always thought that Yoga is more of a astral level sadhana while Advaita is a causal level sadhana.

I got 'Silence of the Heart' a few months back and it is simply mind boggling.

I had contacted the the other Robert Adams website, but I found it a bit bureaucratic (no disrespect) It is my gut feeling.This is a bit like Yogananda's SRF who claim to be the only people authorised to teach kriya. I know from personal experience that this is not true.A few months back I read a beautiful story of Robert about some person who was not in Advaita but was his follower and getting amazing experiences. A few days later that article had disappeared.

I eventually decided to pay for the online course and very next day I came across your website which looks more >authentic< I took this as Robert's guidance.

I wanted some guidance from you as to how one should proceed in such a situation

How do we make these paths compatible and move hand in hand ?

Was Sri Robert a proponent of no-effort needed like Balsekar ? Both Ramana and Nisargadatta seem to have recommended intense while some of their followers say - You are perfect here and now ?

What is the way to approach this and what did Robert have to say on this ?

As of now whenever I practise meditation, I just try the technique as explained in David Godman's Be as You are Chapter 4

If you have transcripts maybe you could sell them to me.

Can you please tell me your opinion about Balsekar and Robert's meetings with Nisargadatta ? I have yet to meet Balsekar although he lives in the same city. Your explanation of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj was the best I have ever read.

You are extremely fortunate to have Sri Robert Adams so well.

Thanking you

Rishikesh

PS I am living in Dahisar , a suburb of Mumbai and Nisargadatta Maharaj Samadhi is about 10 mins from my place. I came to know about this only a few months back although I have lived here for my entire life. It is a relatively unknown place.

Hi Rishikesh,

You ask many important questions. In fact, yours would be enough to fill a book, and that is good.

As I mentioned, both Robert and I were initiated into Yogananda's lineage and Kriya Yoga. For me, after a while, it was just a dead end. I doubt Robert paid any attention to it at all, if you read my biography of him at "Robert's Story."

I have posted on my site answers to many of your questions, especially the Muktananda page under the "Practices" page.

I talk about my own Kundalini experience under Zen and then under the Kapleau pages.

I also talk about it under the bliss of chanting and meditation.

So please read these first and re-ask your questions.

Also, there are eight of Robert's transcripts on my site, his eulogy, as well as two articles I wrote for two journals.

Practicing self-inquiry may lead to the development of Kriya and other frightening Kundalini phenomena. I talk about those on the pages mentioned above.

Regarding answers to specific practices, I also answer many students who have practices such as yours.

Nisargadatta is different from Ramana. I think Nisargadatta's teachings are a little higher, but I suspect Ramana was talking to less advanced students than Nisargadatta, but that Ramana passed on higher teachings to more advanced students. I know this is what Robert did. He said in the highest teaching, even consciousness is an illusion. Ramana talks of enlightenment as the identification with Atman, which is not as advanced as identification with Brahman, which is beyond consciousness.

Also, Nisargadatta himself is confusing that way. Sometimes he talks about the same thing as Ramana, and at other times takes a different position. Once again, he is addressing each student's level of understanding. Naturally, seekers will find this confusing; I did.

Self-inquiry is both easy and difficult. The basic techniques are outlined in my practices section as well as in the meditation sections.

Robert too speaks at different levels. Confusion is going to happen at except to the more advanced seeker. Confusion and doubt have to be eliminated before one can experience the highest. This happens either with the purest practice or by the grace of the guru, who is you.

I have not wanted to be in the position of retail selling of spiritual knowledge. However, Robert did sell his book *Silence of the Heart* and also a correspondence course of one transcript a month for \$60 per year.

Love,

Ed

February 1, 2006

Hi Ed,

I happened to find your site about Robert somehow. I never had a chance to know him, even though I read some of his satsang transcripts long ago.

Anyhow noticing this section, I think I would take issue with a few things you say here:

The two most important practices in the Zen-Advaita traditions are keeping the company of saints and sages; the other is to practice the introversion of consciousness to find the true self, what Ramana Maharshi and Robert Adams characterized as following the I to its source. Keeping the company of saints and sages means being in their physical presence and hearing what they say. Their words can pound deeply. Secondary, yet very important practices are chanting and various forms of internalizing, self-exploring meditations.

What is the point of all this?

Eric

February 1,

Dear Eric,

What is the point of what?

Introversion? Self inquiry? Having a guru? Chanting?

Robert recommended them all. So do I.

What is it you do not understand the point of?

99.999 percent of people will not awaken spontaneously. Of course, awakening itself, in a sense, is pointless.

So what do you find pointless?

I am curious.

Ed

Dear Ed,

There is no technique leading to self-realization. So what is the point of selling techniques?

There is also no realization of the self in introversion of consciousness. It doesn't solve any particular problem at all. It does not lead to any higher or final or other state. I feel it may lead to some bit of delusion and error as well as disconnection from others though.

However, I am not criticizing chanting and the bhakti path as I do not regard these as techniques with an end. Bhakti is its own fruit as Narada says. Moreover, one cannot make an effort to "do" bhakti. It either arises spontaneously as pure joy or love, in which one is not "doing" it, or it does not.

As I recall from what I read earlier today, did Robert not simply offer whatever he had to give? I seem to remember reading that he found fulfillment of whatever he had realized in giving to other people.

Eric

Eric,

Robert gave people what he thought they needed. If they were depressed, he'd try to heal that. If they wanted techniques he gave it. If material things, he gave it. Love, he gave it. I don't know whether he found fulfillment or not doing this; he had no choice. There is no free will here.

However, he gave everyone the same general technique for self-realization: Following the I-thought to its source, or just sitting in silence.

A guru is most important for most. Ramana had self-inquiry. Nisargadatta advised to focus on consciousness. These are introversion techniques.

Whether Introversion of consciousness leads to separation from others is not important. Escaping from the horror of the illusion is important.

So, what about you? You question me and I told you what I think. Tell me about you and your certainty.

Ed

Hi Ed,

Briefly, because I don't have much time to answer everything just now... my own experience is that bhakti opens one's heart and that the path of the Guru is a bhakti path. But I don't believe that it is something one necessarily

chooses. It may just unfold as one desires a Guru to show them the way. And then the Guru appears.

However, in this regard, when I critique introversion of consciousness, what I think I am more specifically critiquing is a certain tendency to withdraw from having thoughts or perception of objects into a state of no-thought/no objects, or a tendency to desire entry into a state that one is not already in. This may just undo itself at some point in the desire for experience. I cannot really say, because I'm sure everyone's experience is different. But moreover, I know that there is no more truth in withdrawing from objects than there is in the experience of the world.

Among seekers who tend to get involved in ideas about Advaita, it seems that it becomes very common to seek in this way and try to contort the mind and the body and such into some state that is thought to be the final state. And there is no such thing. So, from that point of view, I think all this effort is fruitless, whether it is by Ramana's description, or Robert's, or anybody's, of what that is and how to get there.

I mean, ultimately, you are actually no better off going to work, or sitting at the bar, or playing chess, or being a guru, if you are actually looking for the medicine of undoing the ego. If consciousness is truly unqualified, or limitless, then the appearance or form is no more an illusion than its formless attainment is. This is what no-qualification actually means. It is endless possibility, and so, inconceivable, meaning that it cannot be grasped, or held onto, acquired, or attained. You cannot already be other than who you are.

Nevertheless, many people get into "doing" advaita these days in some way or other. I'm not sure this is what it was meant to be like. To me, it all seems silly. Also, because the tendencies I notice in this sort of seeking can take people away from other opportunities, can take them away from developing themselves in various ways, can isolate them and make them reject or neglect the material world, or their minds and their ability to reason and think about things. I'm talking very basic common sense. I don't think this is necessarily a good idea, to go about thinking that everything is an illusion because some tradition says it is. That tradition could be wrong.

There is also probably a great deal to learn from brain/neuroscience of late. Especially as it affects perception and behavior. Because not everything that we can be conditioned to think of as spiritual necessarily is.

I am very interested in everything that you have written about Robert mostly because I like biography, and I like autobiography. I had read Silence of the Heart, and I have a very good feel from those dialogues how Robert conducted his satsangs, as well as the few bits about his earlier life and how he finally went to India and met Ramana Maharshi after his brief time with Yogananda. There is not a tremendous amount of material available about personal experience with Yogananda, and I found what Robert had to say most interesting, I suppose, because he was not necessarily a devotee of Yogananda. Also, from what I have read, Yogananda was not necessarily a devotee of Ramana Maharshi, but was, in fact, rebuked when he met Ramana because Ramana said there was no way to offer teachings to masses of people through an organization due to their individual samskaras.

I do know that Sri Yukteswar did send one of his disciples, Satyananda, to see Ramana Maharshi after his death, and that S. remained there at Arunachala for the rest of his life. And also, from some of what you had offered on the website, I am interested in what Robert had to say about Ramana Maharshi, as Robert was there himself.

Eric

February 2, 06

Hi Eric,

Questions:

Is any of your concerns about introversion or self-inquiry just speculation and critique, or does it arise from personal experience? Did you try it and got into trouble; did you guru advise against it; did someone you care for try it and turned away from you?

Why the hostility? Don't say you are not because it is obvious. Or is it fear?

You do anything but self-inquiry.

You read biographies about Robert and Ramana and their lives, practices and teachings. Yet, you do not look at you.

You talk about brain research but do not look into your own mind.

You had a guru, which you call a Bhakta thing, love, but you do not say anything about it or you. You talk as a theory, an observation, followed by a lecture.

You believe the world is real, because that it is not, Advaita, may be wrong because it is tradition. But, according to that, in your mind, it may be right. That is why you read Ramana, Robert and Yogananda's biography, but do not look at your mind.

You talk about common sense, meaning materialism, things to do in life, other ways to develop. It is true self-inquiry leads to an end of all that. But is that bad?

What development do you think you missed by following a guru, or, just hypothetically, if you were to look at your mind?

Where are you in all this lecturing?

Ed

February 2, 2006

Dear Ed,

Just wanted to drop you a line and say that I've really gotten a lot out of the online satsang letters you've been posting lately. In the exchange with "Eric" you just posted, it looks like you've got your hands full!!!! Wow, I sure don't envy you, having people "assault" you with opinions and then almost expect you to somehow DEFEND Advaita. Strange how Advaita (or what passes for it in recent times.... such as the success of Eckhart Tolle) could possibly find itself in the same position as every single "religion" to ever come forth on the planet. Although it's clearly NOT a "religion", I can see it breaking into factions and the devotees of one teacher at "war" with those of others. That is already happening. I guess the ego can pretty much "co-opt" ANY teaching.

One of the funniest (and in a way, saddest) experiences I've ever had was joining an "Advaita mailing list" years ago. Everyone seemed perpetually angry at each other and worked up and bound and determined to get THEIR personal perspective across. They would say things like "The Tao that can be spoken is not the true Tao" and "anything we say

just amounts to more concepts", etc..... but THEN they would go on arguing their viewpoints over the course of days and weeks and hundreds of emails with each other!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! It would be hilarious if it wasn't so insane.

After reading your allusion to the "other" Robert Adams website, I went and checked it out. I assume you mean "the infinity institute" or whatever they are calling it. I haven't seen it for a couple of years. It's really changed. How can anyone claim "ownership" of Robert's teachings for pete's sake? And it DOES sound like they are referring to YOU when they say things about "other sites not endorsed by Robert", etc. It would almost have to be you.... it's not like there are loads of Robert Adams sites out there! It makes them sound petty and afraid and I would THINK make it LESS likely for a person to purchase Robert's material from them. The whole thing is just one more indication of how nutty the Advaita world is getting. I'm sure it's no surprise to you, because you've been around teachers and devotees and organizations for many many years and have seen all the fighting and arguing and abuse of power and back-stabbing that goes on. That type of thing IS a surprise to ME however. I've never been involved in that world, and my experience of the "Truth" (as limited as that may have been) has been so completely self-evident and OBVIOUS that it would never even OCCUR to me to try to convince someone else of anything or allow them to dissuade my own "knowing".

And you aren't doing that. You are avoiding "arguing" with people or trying to convince them of anything. So I just thought I'd drop you a line and let you know that, in my humble opinion, you are doing a fantastic job of responding to each and every person who writes you.

And that CAN'T be easy!!!!

Keep the faith my friend.

With much gratitude,

Jason

February 2, 2006

Eric's Reply #1

I don't need any of this conjecture where you turn my questions back on me; this is what most satsang leaders do anyway. All I said was that there is no point to all this egoic effort because the nature of the inquiry cannot free oneself. The reason I raise questions about introversion is because I consider it a waste of time. You have been in ashrams, as you have said. Do you consider all the people that you see in many of those places to be well? My experience is different, and many will disagree. But there are very subtle forms of coercion and control of what one can think and do in these environments and often not healthy in very simple relational terms. And many people who are there are not necessarily thinking clearly no matter what they may be telling themselves. But this is almost never addressed.

Eric's reply # 2, same day

You actually think you are enlightened. That you have attained something and you can give it to others. Is that not delusion, Ed?

Eric

Eric's reply # 3, same day

Ed,

I realize that this does require me to address a few more points.

Last night, I re-read what I wrote to you, because I wanted to see if there was anything I wrote that came across as angry in that email. I concluded that it did not, even though my questions were pointed, and I let it rest. I didn't expect that you would write back to me. I thought that probably you would either take or leave what I wrote. Either way, I really don't care. But of your questions, while you may want to ask "is this is my experience or conjecture," it is pretty clear to me that most people base what they believe or assume on experience, as I do. Very briefly again, the problems that I see arising from Advaita, have to do with positing experience in the world as an illusion. What this leads to eventually is mental illness and dysfunction, or a sort of psychosis, because all of our experience of language and of communication is based in the world and in the body. There is no frame of reference other than through the mechanism of the body, period. There are huge problems with positing any sort of unreality to the very mechanism that allows anyone to function relationally with other people. I think this has more to do with the way our brains evolved to use language. If you don't believe me, look at what happens

when you fall ill. You cannot function in the same way. If you haven't noticed, what most gurus or contemporary teachers of advaita are actually doing is playing a game of one-up-manship based on their delusion that they have attained something that makes them (as individuals, egos) absolute. It is about power, on one level, but probably on the most basic level, so that those getting involved with any teacher do not realize that this is how the rules are defined. Secondly, and related to this, is my interest in biography, and for these reasons. Most gurus or teachers who present a public face do so by withholding what they do not wish to be known of themselves, because they want people to believe that they have some secret knowledge. The lie around this becomes apparent of course when other facts are known later, as was the case with Yogananda, if you begin to look at what information comes out much later, and in his case fifty years after his death. And I have looked into that thoroughly. The man was a liar and was deluded, and did everything he could to avoid accountability, but he did have good intentions which he believed in very strongly. Part of this may have had to do with the fact that he was a Bengali who lived in the west for most of his adult life and that he experienced much of the prejudice of this culture in the U.S. during the time he lived here from 1920-1952. But I don't excuse him for this. There are too many things that don't make sense when you begin looking very closely. If you are a psychologist, then I assume that you must know all of these things, or else that after 20 years as a psychologist, you decided that psychology was all bunk and that advaita was true. The problems I see arising from most of these situations around gurus, ashrams, secret spiritual teachings, and recognition of absolute reality, all have to do with secrecy and power, because it is on those levels that people are taken advantage of and duped while their lives are often wasted in pursuits that do not benefit them or anyone else.

On the other hand, I do still strongly feel that there is such a thing as true bhakti, but that experience or understanding of this (or of the actual traditions in India) is often never integrated well enough with the mind and individual ego to cut through what are otherwise delusional assumptions and ideas. This has more to do with its emotional basis, and because of this, bhakti can influence people to follow emotional whims more than reason. Sometimes there is good reason to do so and listen to what is felt, but otherwise not necessarily. I have never found any guru or teacher who actually gives any comprehensive explanation or teaching around these issues, mostly because everything is idealized about their traditions. Most gurus may believe or want to believe that they are doing good in their work and in the world, but I don't believe that is actually the function of the Guru, to do good. And even so, if there is any true function of the guru, I still don't feel that it would invalidate anything I have said here at all. Do you?

Eric

February 2, 06

Eric,

It is quite obvious you are angry and not even aware of it. See Jason's letter.

You responded to my reply with three replies in a few hours, which means something ticked you off.

Again, you say nothing about yourself and present an "objective" monologue blasting most everyone. You did not say anything positive about anyone or thing.

You talk about power, psychodynamics, etc., but where are you? Why do you care about Yogananda? Why do you care what Robert thought of Yogananda or Ramana? How does that affect you?

You do not recognize that your judgments are opinions only.

With your attention exclusively pointed outwards, any inward journey will seem pointless.

Ed

February 18, 2006

I had a hard-disk crash 2 weeks ago and was absent my computer. Sorry if I have not returned many of your letters, but I will soon get to them. I want to dwell on one item as a generic reponse to many letters I get about Kriya Yoga.

I get many questions from Kriya Yoga practitioners regarding how to awaken the Kundalini energy and have experiences like I talk about in my "Kapleau" section under Zen.

Robert and I were both initiated into Kriya Yoga, Robert (1946) directly from Sw. Yogananda, and me by a student in Detroit in 1956.

I don't think Robert ever took it seriously as his starting point was the end point that Kriya and Raja yogins hope to attain some day.

But Kriya yogins must be very clear about where they are going. What is the purpose of Kriya practices? If it is to awaken the Kundalini energy, what end does that serve? Is awakening that energy an end in itself, or just a marker towards another greater end?

Of course the final end, as Yogananda's organization name attests to, is Self-Realization, or God realization or unity with God.

With this in mind, we need to understand the place of Kriya practices.

Remember, Robert balked at such practices and asked Yogananda, "What is the point of these practices, they have nothing to do with self-realization."

In fact, most Kriya practitioners know this, but feel they must start somewhere. Kriya is practical and there is quick feedback that makes one feel as if there is progress.

Self-inquiry, as advocated by Ramana Maharshi and Robert, would be boring to most Kriya practitioners.

The other problem with self-inquiry is that many do not understand the instruction of turning inward; their inner space has not been opened and the vast lighted Void of consciousness is not accessible to their mind.

In situations like this, awakening the Kundalini is VERY important. However, the practices I advocate are opening the Third eye (of mind), and thereby learning to look within to be able to follow the I-thought.

This practice, explained in the Kapleau section as well as in "Practices" is extremely, extremely powerful. It will light up the Kundalini in a way lesser practices would take years—if ever.

Unfortunately, it is easy to get caught up in the awakening Kundalini experiences and become distracted, as did I. Muktananda's who way revolves around the experiences from awakening that energy.

But, it is a dead end. One would have to practice Kundalini for several lifetimes to reach the purity where in spontaneous realization if possible. I use the term "several lifetimes" only as an analogy. I mean, you will never get self-realization by its practice. It is a preliminary practice, a beginner's practice.

Also, Kriya practices as advocated by Yogananda do not require much work—a few minutes to an hour or so a day. Nothing much will come out of that. Awakening the Kundalini as well as more direct practices, such as self-inquiry, or especially opening the Third Eye, are far more quickly attained by intensity. Practice 5-6 hours a day of meditation, opening practices or self-inquiry will awaken that energy ten times more rapidly than tepid Kriya practices.

You also need to recognize that awakening the Kundalini is not always a pleasant experience; the movements of the energy up and down the spine and through the chakras can be painful and other experiences, quite frightening. It is good to have a teacher around at that time to dispel fear.

Of course, you can just push on in your practice and go through it alone, but that requires great courage. Also, once the Kundalini is awakened, it will stay awake, at least for many years, even if you stop it.

Therefore, be forewarned as to what you will be getting in to.

Then again, I ask, where are you going with all this? What is it that the practices are for? Where are you going? You must become very clear about this.

If you are aiming for self-realization, you probably will never get it through Kriya Yoga. It is a beginner's practice. However, beginners generally do not know where they are going. Terms such as self-realization or unity with God are just vague concepts that one may aspire to, but concepts that do not provide guidance. That is, what does self-realization mean when you do not know what self is? What does unity with God mean, when your knowledge of God only comes from reading books by Rama Krishna or someone like him?

Book learning and reading the sutras will NEVER result in self-realization. Your mind must grasp for itself, directly what the Self is. This is realization. It cannot be obtained through books, which are dead words, a thousand years old, but only through the live works of a living guru and your own self-inquiry.

However, I say this clearly, once you attain enlightenment, everything, Everything I state above is found to be not true, illusion. All of the above is

only meant as a "pointer" to that which is beyond mind, knowledge, book reading and spiritual practice.

Once you attain, you will find there is and was no I to attain. 'I' is an illusion. It never existed and does not do so now. But Kriya practitioners are far from this knowledge generally.

Therefore, it is far better to seek the self and penetrate into the inner Void to find self-knowledge than all of the physically-related practices. As Robert said, anything that involves concentrating on the body, its experiences, even Kundalini, just makes the body more real. You need to transcend the body, go beyond the body and realize the Self Absolute.

MARCH 1, 2006

I have been preoccupied with making a living for the past six weeks and have fallen dreadfully behind in letters in and replies out.

There have been around 120 inquiries.

If you sent me an email and didn't get a response, please send it again.

I list a few below. All are late February-late March.

March 1, 06

Hello Ed;

First I must thank you for your website. It takes a lot of compassion and patience to do what you do, but again, I guess we are not the doer and only the means for the doing. I also apologize if my words are obscure and not clear. I was never good at putting things in words especially what comes from within.

I don't really know why I am writing to you for I have no specific question and have dropped all mental effort to understand. I don't know where I am on this so called path, but there is surrender to what is, and the way it is, which also includes my spiritual understanding. I am only left with a will to continue expanding, to go further and that seems to be enough to create a movement towards it. These few sentences are not meant to gain gratification from others either, for the need for that seems to be fading as well.

I was listening to Robert Adams voice on your web site tonight and it touched my heart the way his book did. I too seem to see the world and my physical body as only superimposed images. Form seems to be noticed by the formless within. This form, to me at least, includes the physical body and its movements, sensations and thoughts, and other physical bodies. When there is identification to the form, the clarity of the formless subsides under a veil, but the veil is not a result of thoughts but only identification to those thoughts, and to me that points to some desire underneath. The form and the formless don't seem to be separate but are rather joined and is one, both playing their part in this divine comedy. And then, there is without a doubt, what can not be put to words or described which is prior to form and formless, and all arise from it. Is this what some call Consciousness? When there is complete stillness, there is a presence, if it can be called that, just prior to it. Is it possible that one can merge in to that presence? Do I make any sense or am I really off the track?

I realize how busy you must be, but I really appreciate a response and if not I still thank you for your compassion towards seekers. Funny, I started the letter with saying I don't have any questions and I just realized I am throwing a bunch of them at you.

With gratitude;

kk.

Hi Ken,

That presence you perceive is not you. It is still an object within consciousness, and even consciousness it not real. Nothing. No thing. Even when it appears to be an unchanging absolute, it is still an object.

Nothing, not even God touches you.

Ed

Silence of the Heart found its way into my home and I found my way into your website.

I'm still exploring your site, but I have been reading "Stump the Guru".

"Stump the Guru" questioners obviously appreciate you, your website, and the opportunity to dialogue.

As I read and re-read their writings, I sense that some of them are really feeling despair.

There appears to be so much worry about "thoughts".

Do we really need to annihilate, exterminate, or obliterate our personal thoughts?

Do we really need to be so obsessed with thinking and not thinking?

Aren't thoughts anything more than a vehicle of Spirit?

The power is never in the thought.

Isn't it true that concentration (One-pointedness, Truth, and Principle) is an expanded state of consciousness and not a contracted one?

Doesn't it come through the **principle** of relating all things rather than through the mistaken idea of excluding anything?

So why exclude thoughts.

Isn't the better practice to exalt all items-bodies-things (thoughts) to Spirit?

Material vs. spiritual manifestation

Perhaps the confusion and despair sets in when we think of items-bodies-things as being material.

Knowing this is not really so (that materiality is only dream, illusion, etc.), we then try to deny these items-bodies-things by not thinking about them.

After all, materialization is not spiritually a fact.

But spiritual manifestation is very real.

To quiet the personal mind and the body is good.

To think the thoughts of God (Spiritual Facts) is good too.

Respectfully,

Kathy

Kathy,

Thoughts are nothing more than mind itself. Thought or mind is the world.

When thought subsides, the identity shifts to that which is before thought.

In a sense, thought is the enemy. It keeps the mind moving which prevents it from subsiding in the self.

Controlling thought is a first step. Once the mind is entirely silent and still, more so than 99.9% of the human race will ever know except in death, the Absolute rises as foremost. Then, thought can come and go as modifications on the Absolute.

Yes, thought is the enemy.

To say that thoughts are the vehicle of spirit is a complex philosophical statement. Get before the statement. Why do you want to keep the mind?

Ed

If I think about nothing (no-thing), I am still thinking.

If I attempt to not think or to stop thinking, then I will first have to think about not thinking. So now, I'm continually thinking about not thinking in an effort to stop.

If I control my thought, I am still thinking. But now my focus is on Oneness, Principle, Absolute Truth, Spiritual Facts. And my effort is to make the thought - Knowing.

Thought or mind is the material world. But let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Isn't it true that I AM perceives-conceives ideas now ad infinitum.

These ideas (thoughts) have no purpose, power, meaning, or substance.

No idea is more important than another idea and they are never connected.

These ideas have no value to Consciousness.

I AM conceives ideas because It can.

I AM Purpose, Power, Substance, Being, Knowing.

But I AM never My idea, I AM never in My idea.

Do i have to stop thinking so I AM can be all that IT can be.

Do i have to stop thinking so Intelligence can know.

Do i have to stop thinking so that God can be more aware of Itself or It's ideas?

To get before the statement [thought is a vehicle of spirit] -- do you mean to concentrate on the formless state?

I was simply trying to convey that thoughts, words, and deeds are the vehicles that "carry" spirit into manifestation.

When anything is made plain, we are enlightened about it.

Respectfully,

Kathy

Kathy

You are in a difficult place. Very.

You need to begin to master your mind. It has had free-reign too long.

You don't even know at this point how to look within.

I do not want to waste your time learning beginning techniques. Therefore, I will teach you two:

Try to look inside and find from **where thoughts come, and from where they go.**

Do not let your mind come up with all kinds of questions about thought watching thought, splitting of mind, why should you do it, etc.

This is the mind trying to protect its own existence.

At first, you will be able to look only a short time before getting distracted or falling asleep. Persevere.

It will be extremely difficult for you.

In fact, it might be good to just look for where one thought arises and passes, which is the I-Thought.

The other practice is found on my site, called microanalysis. Alternate the two.

Your mind is too distractible at this point to get anywhere. Therefore, you need to learn how to focus and the I-thought or microanalysis is the way.

Persevere.

Ed

March 1, 2006

Hi Ed,

First off, thanks for putting together such a wonderful site; I often troll the net looking such sites, composed by those who have apparent genuine realization, then freely give of their understanding and experiences. So thank you very much! :-)

My reason for writing is to ask you if you are able to do distance Darshan / shaktipat upon me? As you have talked about your awakening and from my own experiences, I intuit your integrity and realization. You also speak of Robert 'cooking' you with his energies and assisting you in your own awakening. So I was wondering if this is possible or something you would consider? Perhaps if I sent you a digital photo, you would move into a Samadhi state of absolute realization and connect with me via the photo and pour fourth a 'cooking' of energy?

I am aware of the various theories / models for and against such a request and possibility, but, it doesn't hurt to ask does it ;-)

Just a little about me, I have spent over ten years in serious spiritual pursuit (I am 32 and a philosophy undergraduate, almost finished and hoping to go onto a Ph.D. meditating every day and night, with methods from most all known traditions, with some good progress. I feel I am close to 'critical mass' or letting go of the ego into permanent realization of unconditioned awareness,

but, like you, it seems like contact with a genuinely realized adept would be most helpful.

I now am working with emptiness meditation, where as for the most part I have worked with Kundalini type methods, similar to your third eye meditation and tantric Kundalini yoga.

In kind regards,

Thomas

Hi Thomas,

Normally I do not give blessings or Shaktipat because there is no sense of I as doer or bestower.

The Kundalini experiences have 98% disappeared so I am unaware of how I could do Shaktipat.

Robert never gave it, as he felt this was only a body-level thing which made the body-mind more real rather than less.

However, if you are willing, we can try. Send the photo and we will set a time to sit together.

My suggestion is that if you are doing an emptiness meditation, you should continue. Remember, inside and outside are an illusion. With awakening you realize you are not the body nor does it exist. Therefore there is no inner or outer.

Therefore I suggest that even when you are peering into the inner emptiness, try simultaneously to be actively aware of the "outside," in order to make both unreal.

Where are you studying philosophy?

Study of philosophy will much slow down your attaining, but might help a lot if you become a teacher.

Ed

Top of Form

Hi Ed,

Thanks for getting back to me! :-) I gotta run off to uni right now, but as a tentative arrangement, how about Thursday 12 or 1 pm, Australian time. It is Monday 10.30 a.m. as I right this. So Thursday for you would be 8 or 9 pm Wednesday evening for you, I think? We can confirm as we get closer, but I am free on Thursday noon.

I will write again tonight when I get home. Thanks for giving me your time and kindness!!!

In kind regards,

Thomas

Hey Ed,

Phew.... I got cooked well truly that time around!!! ;-) First thing I noticed was my Kundalini awakening, with intense heat in sushuma around the level of the solar plexus. The heat then progressively spread upwards, right up into the brain and crown very intensely. That was the first time that kind of intense flow with its accompanying heat moved up into the brain and crown; usually it is much less intense in the brain and crown area. I ended up sweating a lot and went into deep trance and experienced a unitive experience where I felt like I was an ocean of 'oneness' and bliss, expressing at various levels of energetic vibration.

So as you can see from the above, I had 'oneself' experience, so was not able to achieve the No-self state like the other day. Unfortunately, I was exhausted from work and uni, so fell asleep during the meditation. Some however have theorized, that if one goes into a Samadhi state, but then is unable to bring memory of it back into the waking mind, it appears as sleep to the one having the experience; I don't think that was the case with me though. :-) In any case, I am very grateful for your assistance :-)

Ed, do you have any more advice you would like to give me for the further development of my path to awakening?

In kind regards,

Thomas

Now that the Kundalini has reached the top of your head, you should expect soon that when it rises to there, it will start to come back down through your face and chest into your heart.

Ed

Hi Ed

How are you doing? Just wanted to drop you a line to say that something wonderful happened on March 13th. While I was reading an article,

Suddenly something occurred that I understood there is no observer, just pure insight in everything, everything is being looked at straight, without any interpreter (ego) in between. I started to laugh for a long time and it all felt so funny.

Since then, (I) am constantly in this no-mind state which is very peaceful und silent, No disturbing mind with its endless talks in the background. Just peace and silence in my head. You know what's funny? The article I read when it happened is from Jiddu Krishnamurti, "Pure Observation" was the title of it.

How long can it last? Only God knows or how Balsekar would call it "thy Will happen".

Dropping into reading a few lines in any of the Advaita books is, these days, like eating desert. It's all so obvious. Even reading only occurs when it has to happen.

Much Love and take care, you do an excellent job with your website

All the best

Sven

Great! Try to hold onto it. By that I mean, try not to get distracted. Stay by yourself. Take a few days off from work. Be alone. Nurture it.

Ed

March 26, 2006

Hi Edward,

Thanks for having this great site for all of us. I have found it very inspiring.

I have been thinking lately of going to India, to visit Arunachala. I have also been reading that Bhagavan did not recommend for people to travel to India, since the Self is everywhere. What is your thought on that?

Thank you for your time.

Daniel

Daniel,

Do not go.

A have always advised against it. It becomes a tourist thing; learn India and its culture, spend time at the Ashram. Visit famous gurus. See the poverty and death.

Then people come back, often with some parasite or another, tell me about how hard India was psychologically, and at the same time, how moving and spiritual it was. Yet, they come back with nothing except how moving India was.

It is no more than a tour. Take a cruise boat to Alaska instead.

This is not what you want. You will waste time getting to self-knowledge. You will not find it at an Ashram. If you are ready, there is a teacher waiting for who probably lives within ten miles of you. You will find him/her. In the meantime, look within and find the emptiness, the formlessness within which all objects manifest, including the object "I," which is only a mental object. When it goes, you get everything you are looking for and even more.

That's my take.

Ed

July 31, 2007

Someone very close to me died a few months ago. I knew then that I was not beyond attachment to her. I have not much been attached to being alive. When she died, I felt that last attachment was gone. But, six months later here I am.

For further dialogue go to this site's companion blog:

<http://www.itisnotreal.blogspot.com>