

More and More Unspecial



Advaita teaching posts from Edward "Edji" Muzika's blog
itisnotreal.blogspot.ca

November 26, 2011 – May 30, 2012

Short Introduction

This blog collection covers advaita (non-duality) teaching posts from Edward “Edji” Muzika from November 26, 2011 to May 30, 2012. All very precious teachings. No spelling or grammar have been changed.

Enjoy.

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26 November 2011

What is spirituality, and what about Sex and the Guru and other other issues that screw up our paths?

In the early 1970s I studied Zen with several Zen masters, including Maezumi Roshi and Sasaki Roshi.

During one talk one frozen winter morning at Mt. Baldy, Sasaki said, “You all want enlightenment, but you have to realize after awhile enlightenment can be boring.” He then went on to say how you have to bring enlightenment back into everyday life.

As I had not awakened at the time, his talk had no impact on me. I wanted to awakening, whatever that was, and I had no clue.

Eight years later I was teaching a course at UCLA’s Extension and Zen and psychology, and Maezumi Roshi spoke as a guest speaker. Someone asked him, “What is Zen?” Maezumi paused 5 or 6 seconds, then threw his arms out wide and proclaimed loudly, “Zen is breath! Zen is being present here and now in everyday life!”

As I had not awakened at the time, I dismissed this as the testimony of someone who had not awakened. I judged him as defective because I thought enlightenment was everything, and everyday life was something I wanted to leave behind.

To me, at the time, awakening was something extraordinary that happened to you which totally transformed you into something superhuman, having acquired some transcendental state of non-attached wisdom and bliss, such that any intrusion from everyday life would simply be a contamination.

In the early 1990s when I was with my greatest teacher, Robert Adams, often people would ask him how he saw the world, what was his subjective experience? They would ask, “Is it all Oneness, do you only see the Void, are you in ecstasy all the time, etc.?”

Robert replied, “I see the world much as you do. If I did not, I could not function in the world. The only difference is that I know that everything is Consciousness. I am Consciousness, you are consciousness, the trees and sky are consciousness.” He went on to explain he knew the

objects in consciousness were not real, because they came and went and did not stay, only consciousness stayed, only consciousness was real.

I was not awake at the time, and therefore this talk was also lost on me. As long as you identify yourself with your body, the concept of Universal Consciousness just does not make sense; you have not experienced one-consciousness yet.

During the 1970s, Zen was most popular. There were at least a dozen famous Zen masters in the US, and most of them became embroiled in scandals about them having sex with their students. I never saw the point of these scandals and never had the viewpoint that the poor female or male students were vulnerable and confused, therefore any sex was exactly on the same order as child abuse. I really couldn't see that, for really, who is not vulnerable to love which can come from any direction unexpectedly? Why should love or sex be controlled? I just did not see it.

But the big argument back then was that a spiritual teacher had the same sort of moral and ethical obligations of a psychotherapist or a lawyer with all sorts of exclusions, preclusions, and confidentiality. I really never bought that idea back then even when I was a newby, figuring what did sex have to do with awakening? It was like eating, a natural function of the body, and of love. We don't think of restrictions on love and sex in everyday life except for whether you were in an exclusive relationship or not, but if not, why all the concepts that sex between teacher and student was wrong? I saw students and teachers as equals, as consenting adults, not as God and mortal, or therapist and analysand.

Yes, Maezumi got into trouble regarding sex with his students, and I think was divorced twice in very public circumstances.

Yet, he was very open all the time, talking publically about his failures as perceived by others, and also by himself. He felt shame for drinking too much, being caught too many times in sexual relations with students, etc. But he was extremely open about his problems, to everyone.

To me he once confided, even when I was a student of his, "Why me? Why do I get all the criticism (about his sexual affairs)? Look at Sasaki! He is ten times worse than me, and no one criticizes him." It is true, everyone knew about Sasaki's affairs, but his impish personality allowed him to get away with it without criticism.

As a little known footnote, Robert was frequently asked about sex and vegetarianism. Robert was a lifelong Vegan since the age of 11, and this is one of the few rules of living Robert suggested we live by. Yet when asked about sex, Robert said there was absolutely nothing wrong with it. In fact, problems often arose in our sangha about Robert's relations with some of his female students for one reason or another, and we were often forced to change the venue of our satsang meetings because someone or another got upset about his actions. Robert didn't care who came and went to his satsangs, he was only interested who stayed with him no matter what he did.

This area exposes the issue of trust and surrender, which I will not discuss here, but will at a different time. This is still an area filled with opinions and judgmentalism, but once you find your teacher, even if he/she is not your final teacher, learning to trust and surrender is incredibly important and necessary. Those who never learn to trust or surrender to a teacher, have a very difficult time making any progress, as their minds are always judging, judging, judging and remaining in control.

You see, sex was only one issue around which every teacher was criticized and found wanting in some way or another back in the 1970s, and I suppose even now because the concept of therapist/analysand was used by westerners as the proper boundaries and judgmental framework for the teacher/student, guru/chela relationships.

At that time little was understood about the nature of Eastern spirituality and the inevitable opening of the heart to long buried emotions, including love, jealousy, anger, and the more refined states of bliss and ecstasy that develop out of love, yet the western mind needed to have a framework imposed in order for the busy mind to judge everything. They imposed old rules on a new type of relationship.

Other issues arose such as money, donations, volunteering time and energy for the sake of the sangha, teacher and teachings. Everywhere apparent abuses were found, because the western model of charging for everything was not used, but instead the eastern concept of the teacher taking care of the student's spiritual development, and the student's duty was taking care of the teacher's worldly needs. Many opined that teachers were taking advantage of the students. Again, to me these were consenting adults, and often the giving by the students had so many strings attached, it was more like a conditional loan based on a 40 page contract.

Then, in 1995 I had my first awakening experiences and everything changed. I withdrew from life, I didn't care about the world anymore. I just kept looking inside myself finding a stillness and quietness everywhere—the peaceful void, as well as the great void, which I ultimately was, but which could not be perceived or experienced, because it was I. For years I withdrew and abided in emptiness. I was happy, peaceful, and I began teaching others that the world was illusion, go within to find your true nature.

But after 16 years, Consciousness threw me a hardball. Consciousness sent me someone to love. I was opened like a tin can and flooded by emotions. I was flooded by love, love long buried and unfelt manifested all the time. Other feeling arose, jealousy, anger, fear, etc., and overwhelming positive energies that permeated my entire being. I was filled with joy all the time. Even when depression or a sense of desolation broke through into awareness, there was still an underlying happiness and contentment. Energies coursed both through my body and through my larger sense of presence.

In the words of Muktananda, "I had come alive."

Yes, emotions were there, huge, positive and negative, but they were tame and mild things compared to my experiences of 20 years before when emotions could tear me apart. Emptiness, the Void, and an energized sense of presence contained everything. Emotions just arose and passed away without blockage---not an instantaneous transformation, but one that occurred over six or eight months or so.

This is when I began to make everything personal again. It is as if my personality had become reborn, re-energized. Rather than just watching emotions pass through me, joy pass through me, jealousy pass through me, love pass through me, they became mine and I owned them. Everything became personal. Everything became more real, more immediate, more alive.

But more than that, every idea I had ever had about the nature of the spiritual adventure and path dropped away. I no longer had any ideas or judgments about it. I was completely open to what was happening in the moment to everything arising within myself and between me and my beloved, including the experience there was no difference between us. There is no difference between me and all of you out there. No difference whatsoever. I love you all as myself.

I am free to be ordinary and not locked into the notion of always being in an ecstatic Samadhi, or focused just on the Void, either the Void I experience, or the Void that I am which can't be experienced in the conventional way.

I am now also free to die, to let the body drop away without regret, for every moment I live my life with no set of rules other than to follow my heart and intuition at every moment.

This is what I try to teach all of you. Drop all of your ideas about what awakening is like, what the teacher/student relation is supposed to be, what duties you still have post-awakening, post-awakening paths and problems, etc. All these things will happen to you, awakening, bliss, love, etc., the more quickly you drop your wondering what it is and just focus and seeing and enjoying yourselves and others to whom you relate. Mind, opinions, theories, judgments, and self-checking are the way the mind prevents your freedom.

The post-awakening path really is to become you, just the way you were before awakening, but enjoying yourself fully and completely. There are no faults, no mistakes. You are fine the way you are with all the emotions that might arise, including guilt, anger, jealousy and even hatred, because the emotions that arise are now tame and calm affairs compared to your experience 20 years before. The feelings are welcomed as signs of life. Love is welcomed and readily expressed.

You have now found the path for the rest of your life: becoming the most incredible you possible, not someone else's idea of enlightenment or proper relationships. You have become liberated to be become yourself fully, to be equally comfortable and identified with the void, love, sadness, depression, bliss, ecstasy or even desolation. You fear nothing, not love nor loss of

love, not emotions nor loss of emotions, not life nor the loss of life. All phenomena come and go and you welcome them with joy and see them pass with joy. You are free, but not like Ramana in a peaceful withdrawal, but even while fully embracing ordinary life, just as Maezumi told my class by throwing his arms open and exposing his heart, just breathing is joy, is Zen, is life!

01 December 2011

Are the awakened really awakened?

Recently I have heard so many people claim that they are awakened, but I have my doubts. They talk about having “seen” or discovered that the I-thought does not point to anything, and therefore all concepts are empty and even the mind is not real. Robert used to say all the time, the mind is not real, just a collection of thoughts.

Yet, if we go to the books and writings of those who claim awakening, we find incredible long treatises explaining their understanding and argumentation with others who claim to be “nothingness.”

I see many of the neo-Advaitin and Advaitin teachers of today writing long books about no mind, no self, and yet refer to Ramana Maharshi as one of their idols, even though he only talked about Self.

Go to any of the Facebook enlightenment pages, and people are arguing as to who has the best understanding post-awakening, no I, no-mind.

They all have so, so many concepts. How can anyone who has seen through the mind possible have so many concepts left over and so many moral imperatives? A teacher should be this way or that, a student should be this way or that.

I find no one on Facebook who appears really empty, except in their ability to draw conclusions and teachings about no mind and emptiness.

Don't you see, if you see through the illusion of mind, there is nothing more to say? You see the flow of words from your mouth about awakening, emotions and consciousness is all bullcocky. It is still concepts formed from their own experience of no-I, influence by a dozen current writers on the topic from Jiddhu Krishnamurti, to U.G. Krishnamurti, to Tolle, Parsons, Sailor Bob, and many others.

Why is it that those who claim awakening are so prolific talking about their concepts of what no-mind and emptiness means, both in terms of perception, but how to live life, and even the nature of consciousness. Rather than not-knowing, they know everything.

The bone fide teacher really does not have much to say. As the Ashtavakra Gita states, he is happy, blissfully happy and Oh so lazy, saying nothing, doing nothing. Robert Adams, my teacher, rarely spoke because he knew each time he did he filled his students with concepts which later had to be destroyed. He wanted us to talk around in no-mind, letting our innate, internal and subjective brilliance to respond to the environment at every moment.

When I had my first awakening experience, I had nothing to say of my own for 11 years. What could I say that was not a lie? As Hui Neng said so clearly, “The only truth is that there is no truth; beware even of this truth.”

You see, with this understanding, post awakening, the “proper” use of language is for description and functioning in the world. Meaningful statements are, “Pass the butter please,” “What time is it?,” “How fast was I driving officer?,” or, “I only had two beers.”

A proper awakening experience virtually destroys the thinking mind, the curious and searching mind that loves pursuing knowledge and concepts.

You become empty, dumb as a rock, while your perfect, internal and subjective brilliance apprehends and appropriately responds to the world and to others. AND, you are happy! So many who claim awakening are not really happy, and why is that? Too many concepts; too many should; too much judgments, expectations. They do not rest in the happiness of no-mind, or of a minimumly functioning mind.

06 December 2011

Follow your Heart

I sometimes tell people to follow their hearts rather than give them advice. They almost never do. They follow their minds, which they often call their intuition. One FB teacher calls her mind “woman’s intuition.” For others it is advice received. For others it is a book or something a guru says.

You can watch someone who follows their heart. They glow. They are filled with life and yet there is a deep peace. The heart knows with utter certainty.

Then the mind descends. It is like a dark blanket. It settles downwards from the brain to the rest of the body. The happiness is gone. You can actually see the change in their faces, which becomes contorted with doubt, and even their posture changes. Confusion prevails, and then again begins a desperate search for signs or guides to the way, which hours before had been so perfectly clear.

Then there is utter lostness with only a few hours or days of mental “certainty.”

"They become like a starving person who has found a crust of bread on the kitchen floor and is so fixated on that discovery that they spend all their time looking for more fallen crumbs instead of standing up and walking a short distance to the dining room, where there is a nine course meal waiting for them.

"He/she asks, in agony, where the rest of the food is.

"Several people who care about them deeply hear their cry and tell them of two different paths they can take to reach the feast. But rather than take either path, they decide to read books about the best methods to find crumbs on the ground."

Yet, what to do? We each have to find our own way, in our own time.

08 December 2011

SEEKING

The average person starts her spiritual career totally lost. She knows something is wrong in her life but does not know how to fix it. Sometimes there is just a mysterious pushing in the background, telling her "Something is missing in my life and I don't know what it is."

Thus begins the search for she knows not what.

Some, being of an intellectual bent, look into philosophy, various forms of existentialism, psychoanalysis and insight psychotherapy, or into spiritual movements with complex teachings, such as mystical Christianity with all its symbolism, Sufism with all of its theories, color codes, dream analysis, etc., or the various forms of Buddhism with complex philosophies such as Tibetan Tantra or the many forms of Theravadin and Mahayana Buddhism. Here, her search is for knowledge, believing that her mind can find the "truth" that will satisfy her spiritual itch.

A few intellectuals understand that the search for truth is not found in complex systems and complex teachings even about such simple subjects as emptiness or love, and gravitate towards the simple, yet extremely deep, teachings of Advaita or Zen and their emphasis on emptiness and no mind.

Others instinctively know that using the mind will never result in a solution that satisfies one's spiritual itch. These people gravitate more towards meditation or the bhakti path of love.

Then again, seekers can be defined by the power of their motivation. Some are merely curious and collect teachings and teachers. They really just collect information so they could talk about it and appear intellectual and intelligent, garnering attention. They dig many "shallow holes" of intellectual understanding and spiritual experiences, of which they let go, almost as soon as they happen. No mind experiences mean little to such a one who longs for intellectual knowing.

Some are driven by an extremely deep and powerful motivation to find their unknown completion. Such a one searches with great strength and to many different teachings and perhaps fix upon a couple of concepts that she chooses to focus her search on, such as the notion of enlightenment, or awakening, or Satori, or finding one's "True Self," or a half dozen other

conceived completions.

However, all along during the seeking, hardly anyone places her attention on her true motivation for seeking. Very few know for what they are seeking except as a concept such as enlightenment. She may spend years trying to understand what enlightenment is, or what the fourth state is, or what the I-am is, or consciousness, or the absolute, or one's inner Sat-Guru, but still she has no idea of why or what she is seeking.

A fortunate few after many years of seeking, really drop the notion of finding anything, and instead adopt an attitude of welcoming whatever comes her way as the "finding" she was looking for. The mind no longer seeks truth, a path, or teachings from a teacher, or teachings about love, witchcraft, tantra or the self, and instead the mind is open to allow an uninterpreted experience of whatever is presented in one's awareness, whether of emotion, an external person or event, or thoughts, or dwelling in the void.

More and more time is spent just resting peacefully in her own emptiness, and on a meditation or love-expanded sense of presence, which Nisargadatta calls the 'I Am'. Once the I am is found, once the sense of presence is found, nothing need be done but abide there, rest their her own sense of presence. Her happiness grows. Joy comes into her life. Rest comes into her life. The end of seeking comes into her life. She just rests in herself, the sense of presence which fills her experience of the void, and she is happy for no particular reason. The search is nearly done. Awakening is nearly achieved. The final rest in peace that passes beyond understanding has almost arrived.

Since the center of her being has shifted from her head and thinking into her sense of presence, unembodied, I call this living from the heart, or living from one's own emptiness as Nothing. This Nothing wants nothing for herself anymore, just compassion and justice for all. She has become a saint and is realized.

However, the most sensitive seekers at some point turn their attention to the "itch" itself, the pressure to find and seek. Very quickly she finds that it is herself she is seeking, and the focus becomes on the I Am, her sense of presence and existence. No further knowing is required or is helpful. She very quickly can come to the place of just being, of just being open to whatever arises, for it arises in her.

09 December 2011

Robert was able to talk less and less over the years because of Parkinson's Disease. He knew all of his teachings were just flapping of lips, and he taught just to get people around him, because it was in his presence one felt the peace of emptiness. I understand that during his last Satsang he only said one word over and over, and that was "Freedom!"

This is what I try to teach. Freedom from concepts, freedom from conditioning and society, and mostly freedom from the known. I try to help people get entirely out of concepts and limitations, to face each moment totally unknowing, seeing what is without systems, learning or conditioning. I try to teach to see from emptiness or the heart without all the inner and outer conflict, unarmed by knowledge. Functioning from this place is complete happiness.

However, most seekers for most of their seeking careers are looking for knowledge and techniques. Book after book, workshop after workshop, guru after guru; on and on they plod. Even Robert submitted to their needs by providing Advaita teachings and techniques because this is what beginning and intermediate seekers look for, crumbs of knowledge.

I find most teachers give knowledge and techniques, providing means of control over the mind or external environment, and lots and lots of descriptions, nouns and adjectives, rather than action verbs that lead to freedom. They have systems, progressive emptiness meditations, theories on the meaning of dreams, they teach siddhis, or mantras that do such and such. And students love knowledge because that is the mind's function, and most seekers rely on the mind rather than their hearts or their nothingness, if they even have an acquaintance with their nothingness. Many have brief encounters with nothingness and are either terrified to find they are nothing, or think nothingness has nothing to teach, and being teachings-seekers, they leave the most exquisite states possible--nothingness in its many manifestations--to go back to a learning, mental mode.

This way is difficult because you really have nothing to show for it except increasing happiness, joy and energy. But once you get into a system, like learning the different kinds of emptiness, or learning several thousand koan answers, or developing a siddhi, or learning intellectually about chambers of the heart rather than feeling the rivers of love that are always directly flowing through us, freedom is lost. You are back in school learning someone else's opinions and concepts, rather than living freshly every moment with all kinds of limitations and boundaries.

I have found the highest teachings before one obtains liberation are those of Nisargadatta and Krishnamurti. However, Krishnamurti never offered a method or way, while Nisargadatta did. Mine is a modification of his way and Robert's. I know all teachings are basically illusion, but students don't, so I pretend to teach concepts in order to end all concepts.

All the other posts you see on this site are for one purpose only: to get you to question and overcome your preconceptions and concepts. Recently I have focused on sex, marriage and the guru idea, because these issues are so loaded down with concepts, scripts, taboos, etc. If you can let go here, you will be a long way up on freeing yourself from many other concepts.

18 December 2011

One's spiritual journey and sharing would be a much more welcoming, if instead of providing long quotes from dead masters, one would state their own experiences, then their conclusions, and their reasoning why they believe their experiences support their conclusions.

Instead, generally people have experiences and then search books and for teachers to understand and interpret their own experiences.

It is only after many years one finds there is no need to interpret or explain one's experiences, especially of love or spirituality, by quoting the words of someone else alive or dead, and, in fact no need to express any opinion about the experiences as all.

Experiences came, were welcomed, then entertained, and then they left. When one dwells in their own emptiness, operates from no-mind, from one's own heart, no explanations are needed. This is what Robert meant by the silence of the heart. One directly "feels" one's way in the world from the heart, not the head or mind, from one's own silent heart. But in that silence is such a mystery, such magical happenings, such a miracle!

23 December 2011

WHO SAYS THE I-THOUGHT IS THE EGO OR SELF?

Robert Adams and Ramana both said follow the I thought. Nisargadatta said focus on and love the 'I Am' sensation, the sense of existence.

"Part" of what is revealed is that there is no inner entity, no inner object, no apparent nucleus towards which the I-thought points.

I think in most of us there is a feeling, and the unquestioned understanding, that, there is some nucleus, the personal self, an ego to which the I-thought points, such that when we practice self inquiry, looking at or for the I-thought, and we finally understand there is no entity anywhere to which the I thought points, the entire conceptual system collapses.

That is, there is an unstated assumption that there is an inner I, and opposing that on the other side of the skin is an 'outer' world. When it is seen that the word "I" does not point to anything, the old dichotomy between inner and outer collapses, and we see that the objects we think exist are actually the result of concepts applied to the external world, such as the word 'chair' which is superimposed by the mind on raw experience. With this discovery we understand that the external world in its entirety, is constructed from a mental map of tens of thousands of concepts, some strictly personal, and many which are commonly held by society and culture.

I really don't want to get into the depths of discussion about how this occurs, as it's explained in-depth in my awakening experiences, at wearesentience.com. It is commonly held now in Advaita circles that the experience reveals that the mind/ego is no more than a collection of thoughts that come and go rather arbitrarily. But in fact this is not true.

In fact, each individual is rather unique, and the way they arrange concepts and behaviors, and the way they see the world is fairly unique to that individual despite many shared commonalities. Everyone in our culture knows what a chair or an automobile is, while an Australian bushmen of two centuries ago may not have had that concept at all. but let's take a look more closely at the whole notion of ego, mind, and I.

Why do the Neo-Advaitins assume that just because the word "I" does not point to anything, that the ego does not exist? Who said that the ego or self would have some form or an objective nucleus such that by looking into one's subjectivity, it could be found as some sort of 'object'?

What if the ego is not an entity, but a "collection" of learned responses, learned patterns of perception and interpretation, and adaptational psychic processes by which we function in the world, combined through developmental patterns into a functioning human being?

When we use the word 'ego,' are we not talking about complex behaviors, thinking and interpreting of external events, the ability to focus on external and internal phenomena, the ability to relate to another person, the ability to relate to others in a group and to persist in adaptive efforts to accomplish some goal, also the entity or process by which languages are learned as well as subjects such as physics and economics? Doesn't the word 'ego' really point to a huge collection of behaviors, talents, mental functions and ways of perceiving the world?

In fact, the word ego, is the English translation of Freud's phrase, "Das Ich," meaning the I, or the I-sense. However, for him ego was the reality principal, only part of which was the I-sense; it arbitrated between the primitive demands of the unconscious, the Id, and the reality of the world. For Freud, most everything in our lives was unconscious or preconscious, meaning we could access it if we tried for a moment, and not conscious, "In the now."

The ego free floated depending on the circumstance, from conscious to preconscious, to the unconscious, trying to please the Id's impulses by satisfying them as much as possible given the realities of the world, and also the ego used "defenses" to hide impulses or to deny, repress or transmute conflicts and pain. We refer to these defenses all the time, saying someone is "projecting" onto others, or denying or repressing emotions or seeing clearly what is a fact in an effort to "save" our point of view, or prevent pain entering our awareness.

On top of this we have the personality, the complex of beliefs, weaknesses, strengths, and habitual responses and inclinations that we present to others in day to day interactions, which really are mostly unconscious of, because the personality is us. We really don't reflect on our interaction style or deeply ingrained "truths" unless challenged by a wife or lover, boss at a job, or work demands. Under stress, or in psychoanalysis or insight psychotherapy, we may begin to look at our personality traits if they are causing failure (such as always falling in love with the same type persons that always lead to relationship failure), or other kinds of pain.

On top of this developed the superego, or morality, which at first is quite rigid, and then becomes more flexible as we become adults.

That is, Freud of 100 years ago conceived of a far more complex sense of I, or ego, than Buddhists or mystics of the East. Freud's ego encompassed vast amounts of behaviors, and complexities of personality not dreamt of by Eastern mystics.

Now let us assume there is reality in Freud's model of the personality and ego.

If the ego is really a collection of "processes" rather than a single entity, either an I-thought, or an inner psychic form which we can view by looking into our subjectivity, then of course self-inquiry or the recent "Direct Pointing" method will always find nothing.

Does anyone in their right mind think that we could look within our subjectivity and find our personality? Can we find our personality as an entity? Is not our personality much of what we call the 'ego'?

Can we look within ourselves and find our ability to do mathematics, or rather do we just do mathematics by "becoming" a certain part of the complex structures of our self as a human being? That is, I don't look inside and find a mathematics nodule in my subjectivity, a mathematics entity, I just get into a certain frame of mind which I can't see math symbols and transformations, I become it, and then I can do mathematics. But there certainly is no entity like a mathematics learning center, or physics learning core entity, or an observable ego sub-core entity that controls all of our human interaction skills.

Is not all of this part of what we call the ego? Doesn't the word 'ego' really refer to dozens of invisible processes, patterns and skills, and all of our personality as it relates to the rest of the world?

How can we possibly believe we can look inside of ourselves and find a pattern of how we relate to other people? Instead, in a real-life situation with another person, don't we try to intuitively feel our own emotions in response to the interaction, and cues in the other person's behavior and body language that reveal to us what he or she is thinking and feeling?

Is it not obvious that most of this "stuff" is invisible to just introspection, watching our thoughts and emotions arise and pass away?

If we consider Freud's model and the psychoanalytic models that have flowed from his concepts, staying in the now really only accesses the conscious mind and preconscious, but mechanisms of the ego, constructed by the ego, prevent that same ego, the I, the investigator, from ever discovering the deeply buried stuff, the earliest pains, frustrations, injuries, and vasanas, which are only brought to light when they slip through the ego defenses, such as in dream or free association.

In other words, the ego spends an enormous amount of energy and time hiding stuff working in the unconscious and preconscious areas. How then can we expect the ego, that directs all search and seeking efforts, to uncover that which it wants to conceal from the light of awareness?

Therefore staying in the now, the present, in awareness, can really not take us that far as a method of liberation. The ego is not going to find that which it deliberately conceals from

consciousness. External forces are usually needed, such as a guru, psychotherapist, or challenging external circumstances, such as a life crisis, death of someone close, divorce, etc..

Yes, seeing that there is no I-Center certainly can begin an astounding transformation as the conceptual system begins to collapse and we begin to see the world differently, without concepts, and as Seung Shan might say, with a mind as stupid as a rock, without its constant chatter and interpretations.

The world seems fresh and brilliant, and vivid, our responses immediate and not mediated by thought. Then we become One, I versus the world disappears, and there is just one experience, unity consciousness, with no time lapse between something that happens ‘outside’ and our (inside) responses.

But the lack of an I-entity certainly does not mean that we do not have behaviors, abilities, a personality, skills and a body available to us, as well as seeing ourselves as in relationship to a world and to another.

When we say the sentence, “I had rice for dinner yesterday,” we are not talking about some nonexistent I-entity that we can see through introspection; we are stating that in our memory we know that yesterday “I” ate a certain meal, this body-mind had rice and other food to eat. We are not saying there was an I entity in us, like the soul, that ate rice, we are saying the collective of our body, all its processes, our mind, the personality that is us, our behaviors, all our abilities, for a moment yesterday, sat down and ate food.

As Ramesh Balsekar stated, we are a body/mind mechanism, or entity, not just an I-thought or I sense, although they are part of it. It is this totality that falls in love, marries and has children, gets up at 7:00 am and goes to work, and struggles all day to meet deadlines, then comes home to pay bills and watch television. It is not an I-thought, or I-object that does all of this.

Now we can say that the world is an illusion because we found no entity to which the I-thought pointed to; therefore there was no dichotomy between the inner and the outer, and see that all of us impose patterns of order, of thought and concept onto the external world that we’ve learned to survive, but that does not remove our experience of an every-changing presence or substance, which may no longer have a interpretive map of thought, but certainly exists in the sense that there is always some appearance or another in front of us.

Robert Adams referred to this appearance as illusion because none of it was permanent and is dependent upon us, our sentience, our ability to experience the world in its existence. The world does not exist apart from our experiencing the world.

So what is the difference in between and awakened man, a totally liberated man, and an ordinary man?

I am saying this issue is so complex, so varied, that merely seeing that the I-thought itself is not permanent, or that it points to nothing, really is the barest of beginnings of awakening. There is so much more to do.

All the hidden wrinkles, the angers, hurts, humiliations, fears, and hatreds remain. There is no King I to be killed. Instead we are afloat in a river of inner and outer happenings always impermanent and changing, where “shit” is always floating to the top.

The real meaning of the no-I experience is to introduce us to space, emptiness, the ground state of consciousness, and by living in that, to better deal with the flotsam that surfaces in life.

Another issue that often arises for the neo advaitins, is that they learned from Sailor Bob or someone else that there is no separate I, or separate self.

What they mean by this is unclear. Do they mean there is only One experience, and no world/me separation of any sort?

What does this mean experientially? What is their experience? Does it mean that their intelligence or perceiving is spread equally throughout all their experienced world? There is no inner versus outer, no me versus you, no world versus Ed, John, or Ann? Is this what they really mean?

If this is the case, how do they manage to escape being killed by an imaginary car at an intersection, or escape a gun wielding psychopath? If they are not separate from me, and there is only one, what am I protecting when I run, or look both ways for oncoming traffic? If there is nothing but me, how do I function in the world? In fact, don't all of the neo advaitins proclaim no separate sense of self? if nothing is separate, why do they act as if a car speeding towards them is a danger and jump out of the way? If there is no separate entity, why would there be any fear of death or injury?

It is, of course, because we know we are a separate mind/body entity that needs to hold onto that belief to survive.

26 December 2011

Who said the I-thought is the ego or self? Part II

In part one of this current essay we discovered that the human being is really a collection of many psychological and behavioral functionings and "internal" and invisible psychic structures, which Freud called the Ich, which was translated into English as ego. Later psychoanalysts develop models of the ego further and investigated various mechanisms by which that ego interacts with the world. Later psychoanalysts would call the ego the self, and talk about how that self relates to the world and to others.

In part one of this essay, we saw that it was not even necessary to bother with the I thought, or and I-object in order to allow functioning in the world. Most functioning in the world occurs on an unconscious or preconscious level hardly involving our consciousness itself. For example, driving a car, riding a bicycle, interacting with others in private or in a group, washing dishes, and performing many functions in everyday life and work. The existence of an 'I' was never required.

However, when a person "really" discovers that there is no separate I internally, huge psychological changes can take place. At least it was with me. For many others, it is just an intellectual discovery and the read texts written by others as to what this no-self, or no-I discovery means.

For me it was not so much the disappearance of a separate sense of self, or loss of the sense of doership. These are rather minor things in comparison to what happened to me.

For me, when I discovered that there was no internal "object" to which the I word referred, I realized I had been living my life in a fantasy where I was somewhat like soul inside of the body, separate from the world.

When I saw that the I thought pointed to nothing, pointed to an empty set, I also saw that all other thoughts based on this imagined dichotomy of inner and outer, and self and no self, actually pointed to nothing.

I saw directly that language and learning superimposed a network of thoughts upon our perceptions, and these thoughts mediated between the activities of my imagine I object, and the imagined objects of the external world. I saw that all thoughts are merely the map by which we

think about reality, and were not the reality itself, which we barely saw. Almost always, always, we saw the world through a network of thought. This network assumed a distinction between me and the outer world. I was a ghost in the machine of the body, operating in the world.

In fact, what I discovered is that there is only an impersonal consciousness operating in the world, and I, the real I of the Absolute, was merely along for the ride.

When I saw that there was no inner object related to the word I, I saw that there also were no external objects related to the nouns and adjectives we use every day. The word chair, for example, is a generic word, and we impose this functioning and recognition on hundreds of objects every day in our life without ever seeing the chair for what it is. We see it in functional terms, or aesthetic terms, but hardly ever just look at a chair to see what is there. Our intent, predispositions and education impose a story to cover everything in the world.

But all of this disappeared for me. There no longer was an inner versus and outer. There was no internal direction versus an external direction. There was no inside the skin versus outside the skin. There is only one experience, and only the mind created distinctions and separations.

The entire intellectual system collapsed. The network of thought disappeared. I could see without thinking, I could see thoughts floating through space like tiny clouds that swirled around my mind. This began to affect all other aspects of my life because I began to see that all concepts were up for questioning. All concepts, including physics, mathematics, economics, politics, morality, conventional daily life, the place of work, faith, trust, the meaning of life, were all up for questioning in the sense that they disappeared, and I began to operate in freedom.

Yet, "I" still existed. I was able to talk to people, go to Starbucks, write psychological reports, take care of my cats, deal with my significant other on a daily basis, and read about the philosophy with a new and deeper understanding from the no mind point of view. This entity called Edward, this body mind complex, continued to function in the world with barely a problem. It seemed as if all functioning was automatic, but this is to be expected, since in our daily life most functioning is automatic anyway. It's just that the mind was no longer involved in terms of daydreaming or thinking about the world or what was going on. Thoughts did not interfere.

And the world was seen to be illusory, in the sense that the world I had lived in was an artifact of the network of thought, and one belief in that network disappeared, my belief in the permanence of separateness of the world. Also disappeared. There was just functioning without self reference.

I don't mean that the mind disappeared, rather its importance was diminished. It was not the predominant element that ran my life, but my life seemed to flow from emptiness, and the mind played a subservient role.

Now the question is, when the mind drops, what do I become?

I became me, a fully functioning body-mind functioning in a new world with far less thinking and thought. The illusory world of the network of thought disappeared, and I began functioning out of an emptiness, automatically.

But there was still a sense of I, or being the subject, but it was not confined to any location in space-time.

Then one day I had a second awakening experience. I saw that consciousness itself was illusory and not me. By that I mean that I felt I was outside of consciousness, and the states of consciousness came to me without touching or affecting me. Waking consciousness came and went. The dream state came and went. The sleep state came and went, but I was untouched. I had moved to a deeper level inside of "me" that was "deeper" than consciousness. I might say it was really experienced as "other" than consciousness.

I was that which was beyond consciousness. Consciousness itself is an illusion. The oneness state itself was illusory. All thoughts were illusory.

By illusory, I meant that the experience was that 'I' had a sense of permanence. Consciousness came and went through time, but I was separate and not affected by the passage of the states or the objects within consciousness, or the totality of manifest consciousness itself. The experience was, I am permanent, all else is fluid, temporary, insubstantial, and thus not real, I was that state that supported all the illusion.

That is, I acquired the knowledge that I existed beyond the universe of manifestation. I had never been born into that universe as a human entity. I was not really a human being. I was something else entirely, what Nisargadatta called the witness, or the absolute, or para-Brahman.

I was the unborn, as are we all. Yet "I" was constantly associated with this body mind entity named Edward, that was perfectly able to function all by itself without thinking, self reference, or a separate sense of self in the world.

So what is functioning in the world if I am beyond that?

This was my discovery:

Consciousness was functioning all by itself as an apparent body mind. Everything that existed in the manifest world was consciousness, from the body, to the functioning of the body, to all the objects in the world. All was consciousness operating in an impersonal way in the sense it did not involve the I that I felt myself to be, which was apart from creation, the manifest world.

'I', the witness, the absolute, was just along for the ride as the cognizer, the subject, the witness, and I could choose to identify with Edward Muzika as a human being in relationship in the

world, or as the witness, utterly removed from the world, or I could identify with the void which contained all phenomena and from which phenomenal flow, or I could identify with my activities of the moment as a human being.

Then a year ago something happened. Love came to me. A woman came into my life and everything changed. A new life was breathed into me. A new energy permeated my body and being. And this that was strictly personal. That is, this love happened to "me" at the deepest level of identification. I had become alive as love. The other also was alive as a real, as opposed to an imaginary object within my sentience, my conscious world. The world and I were becoming personal.

As Muktanda said, "I have become alive." That is, I as the absolute had been born into the world as the personal.

I was no longer an impersonal functioning of consciousness, I became love itself, and everything, everything gradually became personal again. Is it I had made a long journey from the personal Edward who began his spiritual journey in the 1960s, culminating in awakening in 1995, then 15 years of lying fallow in this impersonal consciousness, functioning in an impersonal way. Then I awakened yet again. I returned to the world of humanity, even while constantly aware of the great void which contains all of manifestations, and the coming and going of various states of consciousness and objects within consciousness.

But now I was a lover, and the world began to take on a new reality, a reality of spiritual energy and GRACE, with a love for others, and a desire to show them how to break free of their own imprisoning networks of thought, and daily living situations.

I saw that there were other concepts, conditions, and predispositions in each of us, that are far more powerful as a prison, than merely the I thought. There are so many concepts and conditionings caused by society, our educational system, our jobs and our relationships, that create in each of us a private prison that robs us of love and life.

These concepts are deeper into the unconscious, because we were born and raised in these conceptual structures of family and society, as opposed to learning them from teachers and books about karma, rebirth, no self, or Self, consciousness and the absolute, and all the different techniques that are accepted routes for achieving peace and happiness.

These were "local" prisons trapping individuals into lifeless marriages or relationships, boring jobs, depression, feelings of desolation and hopelessness, and endless repetition of relatively meaningless activities. There was no life many people's lives, especially those seeking spirituality. They know something is wrong in the world and with their lives, as well as everyone else's life, but they don't know what that "missing" was. They then began searching, knowing not for what they look.

This is THE major confusion in the spiritual world. What do we want when we seek?

Some seek knowledge. Some seek love. Some seek to disappear, to transcend everything in an ultimate peace as they imagine Ramana Maharshi to live in. Some seek to reexperience life with a new intensity and with feeling. Others see an ultimate security, a knowing of Truth.

But I think what I found is the whole package.

First one discovers that the entity they thought they were is not real, and there is just an impersonal functioning of consciousness that is always screwed up by a hyperactive mind. They discover they are altogether separate from consciousness, a mere witness of the manifestation of consciousness, something outside of this manifest universe altogether.

Abiding there, they find peace and relative happiness. But after time, there arises a feeling of boredom and lifelessness.

Also, despite the peace, happiness and even bliss on occasion, there is a hatred for the world that keeps pulling us out of that peace. Our peace is always disturbed. Even when we are chanting and feeling bliss, somebody comes along and makes a lot of noise in our peace is lost, bliss is lost, and anger arises.

Also, in this world of the absolute, there is no love, there is only witnessing of the activities of consciousness, both of ourselves and the apparent external world, and love is absent. Without love, life becomes lifeless and boring.

Then comes the new movement of love for my beloved, where love is the predominating element operating within consciousness, itself within the Void, which once again makes everything personal. As the Zen master Seung Sahn stated, we have gone full circle, from 0° as an ordinary human being so to speak, to 180° of complete emptiness, the void, and then a return to 360° of ordinary human consciousness once again, but this time transformed and full of life.

This journey of love is so amazing, the experiences are so amazing and dramatic. One feels like a river of love flows through their sense of presence. Others feel constant blissful energies flowing upwards from the heart, gut or sexual organs, through the heart and into the world and the other.

For long periods one may feel bliss which becomes ecstasy. All kinds of states and experiences arise and pass away as our awareness expands in new dimensions.

But the most astounding thing we experience is the descent of grace and humility. We feel like we are touched by God's sacred breath itself, often in the presence of the other, he or she who exists before us as our beloved: lover, friend, companion, guru, or chela.

Grace permeates everything. We fall to our knees in utter awe of the grace and acceptance we feel. We are humbled, laid low, in a new kind of ecstatic embrace by the infinite. We are then complete, finished in this divine embrace that has arisen from and by one's love for another human, lover, guru, chela, child.

The whole world is experienced through the heart and the mind plays just a secondary yet integrated role, a supporting role for the heart-sense. I am empty, bereft of self-care or self-concern, only with concern for the other.

Now that I and the world have once again become personal, a great desire for justice arises and a caring for all. I want to function as a support for all of sentience, for all life from that of a butterfly or worm, to all animals and all humans, especially my beloved.

02 January 2012

A revelation! Ramana's Bhaktic side. Following is a quote sent to me by Janet Beier.

Muruganar is considered one of Ramana's chief disciples. It is so wonderful to find this quote which absolutely validates the way our sangha is moving.

“The experience of not forgetting consciousness [‘I am’] alone is the state of *bhakti*, which is the relationship of unfading real love, because the real knowledge of Self, which shines in the undivided supreme bliss itself, surges up as the nature of love. Only if one knows the truth of love, which is the real nature of Self, will the strong entangled knot of life be untied. Only if one attains the height of love will liberation be attained. Such is the heart of all religions. The experience of Self is only love, which is seeing only love, hearing only love, feeling only love, tasting only love and smelling only love, which is bliss.” (54)

From *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, vv. 974, 652, 655, by Sri Muruganar

Let us forget the Ramana Maharshi ideal of loving everyone and everything. If we love everyone, doesn't that mean we really don't love any ONE? If we love everything, doesn't that mean we really do not love any one THING? When love becomes generic, it loses its value because it is as common as dirt, and all objects and people are the same.

But in real life, is it not the passionate, exclusive, and singular love for the beloved, that allows us to see God in human flesh? Is it not singular, exclusive love that allows the personal self to burn away, to become empty and totally receptive to the other? If love were everywhere, to whom or what can we surrender?

Was not the love of Rumi for God and for his guru, Shams? It was not for all the trees in the forest, or all the people on Facebook. It was for his one beloved, God in Shams.

It is in this duality with the beloved that we find God on earth in human or animal form, and the beloved finds God in us. God worships himself through me and you in duality.

Only then, only when love has completed its work does the self, the I Am, drop away and we find rest in stillness, emptiness and receptivity—the silence of the heart.

05 January 2012

Freedom!

So much has changed recently. So many people are leaving our Sangha and so many new people are coming in. Flux! Change! Freedom! Each leaves with a story, and each joiner has a story why they come. Dozens of stories, almost none of them true, even on the surface, let alone deeper.

Some make up a story and give politically correct excuses. One even wrote that I write so much, there is so much work for him, while Rajiv writes so little, so he will go with Rajiv, who has not changed and writes less, and therefore he has thus less to do.

Others are not even aware of powerful feelings ruling them just out of reach of their consciousness, but which are so apparent to others. If you bring these hidden emotions to their faces, they leave because their ego defenses will not allow them to see these feelings, whether of anger or jealousy, or neediness.

Many leave because they feel I don't pay them enough attention, given how much they feel they do for me. I owe them more, and they feel others get more of me, while not helping like they do.

They do not see this is God's work, the flowing of consciousness in me and in them, and everything is exactly happening the way it should.

I have changed through teaching and interpersonal relations with the Sangha. I am no longer simply an Advaita teacher; it was too confining, too narrow a path, and not "wet" enough.

Nor am I strictly a Bhakti teacher, nor a Zen teacher, nor a Sufi teacher. All of these can become traps rather than a way to freedom. Really, like J. Krishnamurti and Osho, I teach freedom, and that starts with freedom from the known.

The real truth is to free yourself from your mind in order to live from your heart. This can also be expressed as living from your emptiness. In order to do this you need to be liberated from conceptualization, from the dominance of the mind's preoccupation with knowing and controlling.

To be too deeply buried in Ramana or Nisargadatta can become a new limitation. We need the freedom to explore many, many rooms in the mansion of spiritual experiences. This is different from Robert's way of teaching, as least as it appears on the surface if you just read his talks. But in real life he was constantly cooking us by creating chaos in the sangha, creating situations

where jealousy and anger arose, as much as love and acceptance. I learned well his lessons of burning and teach them explicitly, making it publicly part of the process. Not that I deliberately create chaos, but it seems to follow wherever I go. IT IS NOT ME!!!

But no matter what I do, how I change or not, someone, somewhere will not like it and will leave. They will give a reason, because the mind does that rather than feel deeper emotions not felt, or an inner pushing away.

Some leave because they liked Advaita and I was now talking differently. Some thought I was too intoxicated with the personal, considering this to be my own vasana to be worked through before returning to the Truth of Advaita.

Some felt they did not understand the new book from which I was quoting, or my teachings in general; they then found a simpler teaching about consciousness where they felt their minds expand, and confused that with awakening.

Others left because they had a no-I experience, and the path they had been walking was no longer needed or wanted.

Others left because the emotions were too great, and what they “really” wanted in the now was peace from the feelings, escape.

So many stories. But if you step back, you can watch these events come and go as waves. The waves comes in then recede at the pace of the ocean, not your pace. Seeing this is freedom.

And as Robert said, he watches to see who will stay until the end, no matter what he does or does not do. It is not so much a matter then of awakening, but of loving and being loved by the other. Who can do it?

I really, really love you all so much, but know I teach freedom from the known, even from Zen, from Advaita, from Sufism, from Taoism, from Christianity. I teach no truth, and in that you can find awakening, love and peace. Or you can find energies, excitement, and understanding.

There is something here for everyone, and also for no one at all.

09 January 2012

John:

Jesus, i just read dennis' comment to your post of the last satsang. it seems like everyone has jumped on you. i guess he thought you were irreverent to krishnamurti.

I don't know. you take a lot of shit.

People suggested you have an online website---'ok'

Do it like this---'ok'

not those old yogananda songs edji, krishna das---'ok'

Mute your mic edji, we don't want to hear you---'ok'

I'm not too cool with you absorbing all the shit, including my own.

I'm not a happy camper edji. i've got a lot of anger.

I also feel, in regards to you, like an ungrateful, spoiled child. Do whatever you do.

People will never appreciate anything, ever.

Ed:

John, it is all bliss. The movement itself is all bliss.

Drop into your heart, and watch from emptiness.

The first day that the commotion started, many things were happening, not just the leaving. Many, many little crises with financial accounts, contacts, and an attempted hacking of my website, etc.

I felt attacked, like "negative energies" were coming my way. I even felt fear for the first time in years. The next day all was normal again.

Then something miraculous happened.

I began to feel an intense love for this breaking process, and for a person I know. This accelerated until last Monday, a week ago, when I felt an intense love growing within me, and with it an internal light, a column of brilliant white light extending from the bottom of my spine through the top of my head.

It was like a powerful dynamo of love. I felt like God was loving the world through this body/mind and felt expanded a dozen-fold.

Gradually the intensity of the love grew immensely stronger and I felt a continuous ecstasy, radiating love into the world. There was a reshuffling in the Sangha and I delighted in it, welcomed it, and felt bliss in it.

Finally, some movement in the Sangha. It had grown static.

For four days I burned in this ecstasy, and things came and went. I met two students for dinner Friday evening and they felt burned and ecstatic by my energy.

Finally, yesterday for the first time I returned to normal then went the other way, towards a feeling of desolation and despair for half a day.

This is all part of my process of reentering the world teaching different teachings.

It is a continuously wondrous experience.

Nothing is static. Everything comes and goes, but I remain, really untouched even by the ecstasies and the desolations.

14 January 2012

Oneness, duality and living from the heart

The “path” is quite complicated, is it not? Looking and searching both without, in teachers, books, and teachings, as well as inwards in meditation, psychotherapy, and even drugs for something.... But what is it? New “spiritual” experiences, finding love, either in receiving or giving it, finding a “nondual” state, either for a moment or permanently, or a sense of completion and coming home? Confusion reigns.

But this is all in the mind, this sense of lacking, needing something more. Even with a lover or guru, it is fixation on the other as an image in the mind attached to a feeling near the heart that we interpret as longing, needing, jealousy.

But, when we are in no mind, when the mind drops and we are in the heart itself rather than watching the heart-sense, life is effortless. Perfect, accepting.

But is it possible really to love another unless we allow dualism? Without dualism the other is me or us, and from this position, we can only see ourselves and all emotions that arise are from our own limited me sense. The One is no more than “me” enlarged to include everything, including our beloved. Our beloved, whatever or whomever, is me.

To truly love another, we must be able to see them as the “other,” with their separateness not dependent on “me,” with their own wants and emotional needs, their own life trajectory. We have to be able to see them as they are and even better, to see them as they see themselves. We need to feel this space between us even if only to see the “stuff” we each project into the other.

If we live only in the non-dual awareness, we really don’t accept the other as separate, but only part of us or me, and the danger is that my beloved’s actions may take part of me away from me. I might lose my love of myself were she to go. Thus the struggle to maintain self in relationship becomes a desperate clinging to I and all that is me.

It is a continuous learning process, this living in various identifications, whether it be unitary nondual consciousness with it continuing clarity and beauty, or a life of dualism, where only there can you have true relationships, or living from the heart where both come together.

Every day in the morning, Zen master Ruiyan would slap himself in the face and say, "Don't be fooled by anything today!" To which he responded, "No I won't."

What does this mean?

It means he was entering the last phase of self-mastery. He was not accepting any concept. In fact, ANY concept that arose, he would cut it down.

After one has attained a sense of completeness, you realize that contentment comes from not accepting anyone's "truth" except your own. And, you yourself have no truth at all, no concepts, no understanding, and as soon as anyone throws a concept at you, you knock it away, leaving you just walking forward, straight ahead, not fooled by any "truth."

This was said even more cogently by the Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng, who said, "The only truth is that there is no truth; beware even of this truth."

So many cannot imagine living in freedom where the only "book" they read is their own intuition in the moment, an intuition derived from throwing all books, teachings and teachers away.

18 January 2012

Can you go naked before God?

Some have asked, “Where is Robert Adams in your current teachings?” Others have been more sarcastic, and have remarked (of me) “Some have ears but do not hear; some have eyes but do not see,” intimating I was around Robert for years but never understood him as deeply as my critic obviously thought he or she understood him.

I will say something here that they will not hear.

Robert taught freedom, not about the absolute, God, Brahman or even Consciousness. His last words at his last Satsang, was only one word, repeated over and over: Freedom; Freedom; Freedom! But he used concepts and situations to affect the direction a student was heading in, and at Sunday Satsangs, he was pure Ramana.

On Thursday evenings he sometimes went much deeper. Sometimes someone would ask a question and Robert would go on a roll. The words that poured out were pure truth, insofar as truth can be expressed in words. A few of us close to him and maybe a few visitors would be stunned. Our minds would become weak and then wash away.

For a few minutes he stopped talking about karma, love, the guru teacher relationship, or anything else we could remember. It was more or less about the Infinite, going altogether beyond knowing and unknowing, going beyond Brahman even. We were transfixed. There was a transmission of some sort, an energy, a grace descended. These were Robert’s true teachings, golden words about that which is beyond concepts, the world, and ANY experience, no matter how transformative or transcendental.

Then he would return to earth and be Robert again. But we were changed.

The concepts Robert taught about karma, God, oneness or Consciousness itself, would be untaught during a Satsang a week or two later. He knew all concepts, especially spiritual concepts, were illusory, empty. Once in a while he would give an entire Satsang talking about the Four Principals, Three understandings, or something like that, and at the end of Satsang he’d become silent for a moment, then announce that all he had just said, all the knowledge and concepts were bullshit. He didn’t use that term of course, that is mine. He’d say, “I gave you a story and concepts because that is what you like to hear.” Robert considered Satsangs, especially Sundays’, to be pure crowd entertainment.

Besides some of those hot Thursday night Satsangs, a few of us met with him weekly or even more frequently on a personal basis, for lunch or a movie. Here quietly Robert would work on us to help us win our own freedom, either by setting up a situation within the Sangha to make us let go of certain ideas, conditions, desires or ambitions, or by offering concepts opposed to those we held on to.

Robert taught many different methods of meditation, and each in the audience was free to select whichever method they liked most. But the method he taught most was self-inquiry in its myriad of forms, and self-abidance. He taught us to go inwards, into our inner emptiness where dwelled the mind, images, emotions and everything we called subjective. There we were to just watch. Watch for the I-thought and find its origin. Watch the other thoughts come and go. Look for the subject.

This place is as close as we can come to our true nature in consciousness, but from time to time, he'd say we were beyond even that. **AND SO WE ARE!**

You know, so many students say they want that, complete freedom, enlightenment, but in fact they don't. They hang onto concepts and exploration of concepts and new experiences. Many, many came for a year or two and thoroughly understood what Robert was saying, took those concepts into the world and the experiences they had with Robert, and became teachers. Some just left and looked to a new teaching thinking Robert's teachings lacked something. Eventually the fire of seeking dies out, and maybe after 10 or 30 years they come to peace and stop seeking. But in most, even after 30 years there is a hunger to find the real, a final resting place of truth, which is so hard to find because they use the mind and "teacher of the day" to find ultimate rest, which is really discovery of their own true nature which is always with them.

The problem is they have accumulated so many spiritual systems which remain as contaminates of their pure nature, that it is impossible to ever find their Self unless there is some life crisis that shakes them and their belief systems to the core.

To use an analogy, through the years, people accumulate a wide variety of spiritual clothes which gives them some warmth and safety in a cold and harsh world. But to see the Self, become the Self you are, you need to shed all those clothes. You have to undress and shed all of those hard bought spiritual clothes, the koans, prayers, beliefs in karma, the I Am, the Beloved, concepts of family, guru/disciple, spiritual progress, compassion, and even concepts of transcending.

This is what I am trying to do with you as Robert did with me: Undress you until you become naked, exposed for you and all to see clearly. Nothing is hidden, no private treasure is kept in the closet not to be touched by self-inquiry. Everything is thrown away.

But this often brings terror. “I have no clothes, no security, no stability, what am I to do? I am frightened and terrified. I need someone, something to hang on to. I need the warmth of soft teachings and maybe a father or mother figure as a teacher. I need to feel safe.” This is the dilemma of the sincere student. He comes looking for the Absolute and finds only that the teacher wants him to become naked before God and his own Self.

The teacher says, “I am here. I can take you, but can you receive? Can you stay by me and walk into Nothingness without all your clothes, books and concepts? Are you courageous enough to drop the mind and tolerate the cold harshness of the world in order to discover who you are?”

So few are. Robert knew this and dished out Advaita concepts on Sundays and maybe deeper concepts of no concepts on some Thursdays. He sold a lot of spiritual clothes, because for some, that is all they could take.

Even I failed with Robert. I failed to move to Sedona to be with him through his last days. I was terrified and even got deathly ill when I got close to Sedona. My mind and my entire beingness rebelled and failed me, the Self. I could not take Robert’s cooking anymore, his “games,” his created situations, and the lack of security I felt going there.

Robert, on the other hand was fearless. Before he left he told me he would be betrayed by all the people who were trying to seduce him to leave Los Angeles with promises of financial support, and support of Satsang.

One by one these people came to me and told me how they were going to help Robert and also me to get settled and find a job. I reported what they said to Robert, and he frankly told me that they would never keep their word. He told me that every one of them would betray him, yet he went to them knowing this.

This turned out to be truth. They did not support him as they promised and finances were always desperate. Robert often called me or I him just to talk, and he continually wanted me to come, but I could not. I was afraid because there was nothing there for me. The people there made it clear I was not wanted. They wanted Robert all to themselves alone. All the former promises disappeared once Robert was their captive. Yet he went into the unknown, knowing this, and out of fear, I did not follow.

So I ask, do you trust me to take you to an unknown goal of freedom? I won’t even take you to the safety of the “Absolute,” or “Brahman,” or “God,” for these are just words to give comfort. Are you willing to shed all your concepts, beliefs and security to enter the unknown? Or like most, are you more interested in the excitement of buying new clothes, and shopping at the niche shops of Advaita, Sufism, mystical Christianity, Taoism, Jainism, or being with an energy guru?

A note relevant to the previous post about going naked before God.

Some think there is a great distance between Bhakta and Jnana. Only in the outward form. Though Robert is called a Jnani even in the Ramana Ashram, remember his famous story of meeting Ramana. I don't know whether it occurred when he first met him, or later when walking around Arunachala.

Robert said this story with great passion. I was there at this Satsang. He was electric. He sat on the edge of his chair perched somewhat forward and looked upwards and into the distance, as if he were again seeing Ramana.

He said Ramana and a group of people walked towards him and suddenly he felt complete surrender and devotion. He felt utter humility and wanted nothing more than to touch the guru's feet and surrender.

He said he took off all of his clothes and dropped at Ramana's feet, totally surrendered. Totally loving and devoted.

At this point Robert said, "This is how you have to be," as if the story was self-explanatory as to the need for surrender.

Ramana supposedly either grabbed him or told him to arise, I don't remember the story exactly and said, "I have been waiting for you." I'll bet Ramana did not specifically mean Robert, but he had been waiting for any of the devotees that showed such devotion and surrender, because these people, these devotees already were close to God and felt the ecstasies of being with the infinite.

21 January 2012

Recently people have complained that some weeks I sound like student A, then student B, and wonder where Ed's central thread went. They ask, "Where is the Jnana, or what happened to the lover?"

I can only say I am much moved and influenced by conversations of those who I am close to and who are burning. Their burning catches me on fire and I write from my heart whatever comes up. Each of my "lovers" is in a different place. One is shedding concepts and conditioning, another is learning to love herself, another has gone entirely beyond the world into the Absolute, and yet another is lost in unending bliss, a rapture from which her body is forgotten. Another begins to burn brightly in the Rocky Mountains, another is half a world away who always feels my presence.

When they talk to me, I am blown away.

I used to see this with Muktananda. When someone came to him and spoke with clarity and passion, it was as if he blew in the wind, he bent and surrendered to their shakti, and this juice then became his truth of the moment. Teacher and student were equal, and he was like clay bent and wriggled into a new form for a moment. Then moments later someone new came, and if they came with passion, energy, he was transformed again.

Such happens to me. People come to me and when they burn I see their truth. I feel their truth. One is becoming a new Krishnamurti, another is becoming Kali, another becomes Krishna, and there is room in me for each for that moment.

Then I write, and when I write, I express their truth as it unfolds and it appears my central thread is lost. Their process and truth inspire me. Their expressed truth will be of some help to someone, somewhere.

But the truth is, I have no central thread. I have no truth. I am there for them, not for me. I feel like I take on the clothes of whomever I talk to at the moment. Those I talk to most, those are the clothes I wear at the time.

Of course in the center is the untouched, the origin of the manifest world. All the rest is mind including all the writing that spill from these fingers. And a few are always with me, inside me, sharing my emptiness, sharing our mutual purpose in the world. Above all is Robert and Nisargadatta smiling downwards.

24 January 2012

Things gurus don't tell you

Robert used to embrace uselessness. He used to embrace leaving your job and dropping out. He would say don't worry about bills, payments, medical insurance, obligations, etc., just leave the world behind. Don't worry about the pragmatics of day to day life.

The John Wheelers and Parsons of the world really don't talk about life during the awakening process or afterwards as all of your cherished beliefs and concepts are blown away. One day you are ignorant of yourself, the next day you are awakened, self-aware and all problems have disappeared and are resolved.

This is bull. The process of awakening, losing beliefs, attachments, concepts, and even the belief you are the body causes tremendous changes in your day to day life. This is a sign you are really changing and awakening.

Relationships fall apart, you no longer love your husband or wife, the idea of being pinned to a 30 year mortgage creates nausea. The struggle to maintain payments on your BMW, \$700,000 house, and student loans becomes too much. The belief in the benevolence of friends and the government go out the window. You know the wealthy are trying to take more and more from you. The health care system is rigged to extract the most money from you.

Fox News and MSMBC are both mouthpieces for a partial perspective. No one speaks to you honestly, they lie a little each word they say so as not to drive you away. Sometimes they smile and you can feel their hatred.

Strange energies awakening in you and you can't sleep or you sleep too long. You don't talk to the kids anymore because you are immersed in indecision about everything. You just want to be alone, or you just want to be with someone else or be somewhere else.

All your self-told lies disappear and you are exposed to your own truth more and more, and that which is not part of your truth falls away.

Things no longer unfold as they did before, but unfold in a new and frightening way as your entire past is seen as a lie and yet you still do not see your own truth clearly.

In other words, your daily life goes from a boring certainty, to an insecure emptiness, yet an incredible and frightening aliveness,

Intense practice, or intense involvement with a free teacher creates situations with a lot of out of control emotions, matched at times with an inner deadness, followed by periods of intense self-doubt and self-inquiry.

Do these gurus tell you of this? Do they warn you of this?

You see, Robert did and incorporated this inevitable collapse of your belief systems and lifestyle, and made it a part of leaving the world behind. When your whole lifestyle and thought structures are deconstructed due to self-inquiry, self-abidance, or watching one's thoughts in emptiness, radical changes to one's outside life are inevitable, as well as to one's emotional composition and self-boundaries.

In other words, the walls come tumbling down, and chaos reigns for a long, long time. If there is not a bit of chaos, then there is no real change happening on a deeper level. This must be obvious is it not? One cannot continue in the old lifestyle with the beliefs you had before when everything is being radically questioned and whole new worlds of perception and cognition are opened.

I warn my students of this. Robert incorporated this falling apart into his teachings and made it a goal, the goal of becoming good for nothing, meaning really not good for anyone or anything in your previous lifestyle. And, you will be good for nothing until you live your own truth, rather than society's, your spouse's, your children's, or your employer's "truths."

Intense practice or intense involvement in the movement towards freedom has to produce such external chaos. Is it not obvious? Freedom means freedom from your past conditioning and the known.

What Krishnamurti missed however, are all those states and understandings beyond mere recognition that there is no separate 'I' or separate doer. He did not talk of the ecstasies, the awesome Void, the feeling of the sacred, the feeling of surrender to the divine, to one's own Beloved. Nor did he speak of rivers of love that move through one's body and one's sense of presence. Nor did he talk of a love so deep that you disappear into the other, or of a void so vast that you fall to your knees in awe and sometimes fear. He did not talk of the awesome power you feel sometimes when you feel aligned with your own destiny and feel its inevitability. There is so much that teachers do not tell you, both of the richness and the sadness and desolation you will encounter.

It is like the Matrix Trilogy. When you take the Red pill, everything changes, enlivens, collapses, becomes chaos, reorders, and you become alive. But sometimes you crave the Blue pill, to let you return to your old life and its security. Once you really take the Red pill, you have a tiger by the tail and you cannot let go because he will eat you.

06 February 2012

Feeling a bit overwhelmed.

Seems like I have a new, full-time job as Lakshmi's chef and home health care worker.

In addition to my usual duties of trudging to work each day on website, blog and Facebook, Lakshmi's care requires a lot of work.

There were three 50 mile round trip travel to her vet, including going back because they gave me the wrong syringes, but 4 X day feeding, including preparation of her medication cocktails which include an antibiotic, chemotherapy meds (Leukeran), Bumorphine 3 X daily, steroid cocktail, Alpha Interferon, and soon Palladium. All have to be combined into one syringe and administered through an injection port in her PEG feeding tube.

It is a relatively complex procedure of flushing the tube with water, inserting the meds, administering a gradually increasing amount of food as her stomach stretches, as well as processing the food so it can pass through the tube.

Then I had to get topic antibiotics for the tube wound, gauze, a new cage for her initially to limit her movements and to have easy access to her for feeding, a new bed, etc.

I feel really nervous doing this, because even administering the food is not that easy, as I have to first aspirate her stomach contents to make sure the food is being absorbed, so as to not overflow her stomach.

Adding to this, the psychiatrist I do some work for has doubled the amount of reports he needs done recently.

Add to this, some of the people I know well recently have been making remarkable progress but also are under a lot of strain, and I feel every inch of their stress.

I have found recently that those close to me are all interconnected. What A feels, I feel, and so does B, C, etc. The closer we are the more we feel in terms of the other's emotional condition, clarity or confusion. We are all tied together and some of the anxiety I feel is due to others, while some of the love I feel, is also a "preconscious" awareness of their existence.

We "feel" each other, not only when in contact, but always. All in all, it is "interesting times."

09 February 2012

The spiritual processes around a guru and ashram

A year ago I was watching a video of my friend Shankarananda with two other swamis from the Muktananda tradition, who had run ashrams for a number of years. It was moderated by Andrew Cohen. Mostly the program addressed the personal difficulties the three had encountered running ashrams with a combined experience of over 90 years.

The uniform theme was that it was quite difficult. People in the Sangha always came to the ashram with tons of preconceptions about what spirituality was about, what and who the guru was and should be in terms of who or what he or she was supposed to be, and what he or she was supposed to deliver. These ideas and preconceptions varied widely, and did their own preconceptions about their own obligations to the teacher and the ashram.

One swami discussed his loneliness as he really had no one to talk to “at his level,” which to me sounded rather arrogant at the time. Another talked about daggers coming at him from all directions, as chaotic battles and backstabbing were or could be breaking out at any time. Another talked about how careful he had to be in every statement, every word, every facial expression for fear of causing someone an offence and starting some sort of buried seething or overt angry confrontation.

Most new arrivals did seem to have a similar idea though regarding the ideal guru as Ramana Maharshi or someone similar, benevolent, aloof yet loving, undisturbed by anything in life, a constant smile on his face, exuding shakti power that turned the ashram into a Shangri-La of bliss and ecstasy where everyone felt loved and accepted. Others had no fixed notions, but I remember I did. I had never contemplated a Zen master or guru to be an ordinary mortal being with faults, maybe some insecurities, or having romantic relationships. I figured they had all totally gone beyond, as the “Gone, gone, gone away, gone away to the other shore” of the Heart Sutra predicted.

Then for each newcomer, gradually came the recognition that once again, they were just in a new group of ordinary people with faults and preconceptions, led not by the Son of God, but by a human being with irritating faults, perhaps too aloof, perhaps too personal, perhaps even-handed or not, and perhaps playing favorites. That is, each week that passed, preconceptions were shed, or else the person left in disappointment or disgust.

Very few were entirely happy with the ashram situation. They had expected something different, perhaps an easy road to awakening, held in stasis by the ecstatic presence of a divine guru. Later, that same guru might appear to the newcomer to be a horrible, uncaring, self-centered lout that only cared about himself or the ashram, and not about them as people.

Others thrived in the ashram situation. Personally, I loved them, from the many Zen centers and monasteries I lived in to the three Muktananda ashrams, to the Hari Krishna temples and compounds I visited. There was something different about ashramites. They were not much involved in the world. Instead they were involved in going into themselves, practicing meditation or ecstatic chanting.

Many of these ashrams were remarkably stable, some not. If there was an ashram where people lived together, the Sangha appeared more stable. The people living there had each made some sort of commitment to the ashram just by leaving their former life and living there. One notable example is Leonard Cohen who left his celebrity life behind for long periods and moved to Mt. Baldy Zen Center and became a monk. Leonard found peace there and found a deeper sense of himself.

However, if the Sangha just met for Satsang once or twice a week at someone's house or at a center of some sort, it tended to be unstable with a rapid turnover. There is something about having made the commitment to live together that stabilizes the Sangha.

I was with Robert for 8 years, about 7 in Los Angeles. Over those 8 years, maybe thousands of people came to sit in Satsang or have lunch with him and thousands more met him on the phone or had letter contact. Robert never had an ashram, we always met at someone else's house.

Like clockwork, every year the Sangha would be torn apart by some inner conflict and entirely break up. Every year we were forced to meet in a new house of a new student, because of an explosion of rampant jealousies, arguments, perceived slights and humiliations and perceived failures of Robert to be the perfect Ramana-guru; the Sangha would break up and half would leave without ever explaining why and we would start all over again somewhere else.

The central problem in Robert's Sangha was Robert's behaviors contrasted to his words in Satsang, and access and/or control over Robert and the direction of the Sangha.

It seemed everyone wanted more access to Robert than they had, and there were many small cliques that wanted to control every aspect of the Sangha, from who was to transcribe Satsangs, who was to compose and edit Robert's books, who was to tape record, who was to coordinate bringing food and deserts for Satsang and our bi-monthly parties, who was going to be spokesperson, what chants were to be played at Satsang, advertising, writing magazine articles, etc. Everyone wanted to help and everyone had their own ideas of how something should be done. There was not a lot of surrender to the way things were, nor was there much surrender to

the totality of the ideal of the greater good of the community or Robert as a person. Everyone just wanted to be closer to Robert, having his Darshan, his remarkable presence of peace, emptiness and utter acceptance, but in the larger sense, they did not want to pay the price of inner work, supporting the guru, and of surrender, which is the crux of the teacher/student relationship--at least for me.

But getting close to Robert was difficult. His time was limited and he had a few close students he met with for lunch every week, which limited access to him except at Satsang. In such situation, cliques almost always form, although his closest students all really got along with him: Mary, Lee, Dana and I.

Unfortunately, many came to Robert, and attempting to get close, would try to “poison” Robert’s mind against one or another of us, or even set up a clique within the Sangha and approach Robert with some project or another in order to gain more access.

People would tell Robert that I was doing this or that, which was ruining Satsang and the Sangha, or that there was a new person who was to be carefully watched because they had a bad “vibe” or some other problem. Mary, Lee and I were always targets of being bad-mouthed by each other, or by them telling Robert all about our faults in an attempt to get closer to him by pointing out how faulty we were compared to how “loyal,” “honest,” or loving they were.

Robert’s Sangha was often like the Vatican under the Borgias, with constant intrigue and behind the back bloodletting. Generally, it ended up with many blaming Robert for being who he was and doing what he did. Students never took responsibility for their own actions and emotions, and projected the whole mess onto Robert, or me, or Mary or someone else.

Over the 8 years I was with him, only four stayed with him to the end, Mary, Lee, and Dana. Out of thousands, only 4 stayed. Robert was always looking for the ones who stayed despite all the turmoil in the Sangha.

The same is true of all gurus. Very few students stay long, and the closer you get to the teacher, the less likely you are to stay because others in the Sangha begin “disinformation” campaigns to advance their own agendas by disempowering someone else.

Strangely, I saw much less of this attitude in any Zen center or monastery. With the zen masters, and in the 70s and 80s, we knew who was in charge. The problem arose more with the Robert-led Sanghas of few rules, no shared living quarters and no set responsibilities. Robert was not a disciplinarian, nor did he care much for the direction that the Sangha went. That meant a very loose management style, leaving openings for people to come and go making suggestions or doing whatever they wanted, whenever they wanted.

A lot of people become like love-starved little children, looking for recognition, a kind word or approval or from the Sangha itself, and more and more access to the teacher.

You see, often a new person comes with infinitely good intent, filled with a strong desire to know his or her self and truth, filled with devotion, and loyal to the entire process, but their own deep and personal needs got activated. Then instead of using this as a perfect opportunity for self-inquiry, instead they get blown away by the intensity of their own needs as well as by whatever is the guru's response, whether giving or withholding.

This happens to every student at some point, and usually a multiple number of times, as happened to me with regard to Robert. While a few ask themselves these self-investigative questions, most remain focused on what they didn't get from Robert or the Sangha. Few went within themselves and ask what it was about Robert that pushed them to expect or demand this or that from the guru. They did not ask, "What is it IN ME that needs to be stripped from ME, so I can feel open and loving toward my guru?"

This is the sort of personal self-inquiry that every student needs to address at moments of a separation crisis. "What is it in me that makes me feel Robert or Ed are failures as teachers? Why is it I do not trust the spiritual unfolding process? What are/were my expectation and are they realistic, or are they childhood remnants that interfere with all my relations now?"

In many cases these are purely psychological questions pertaining to a perceived failure in a student's relationship with the teacher, but they need to be resolved so that they can become empty enough to get emotionally close enough to the teacher to experience repeated glimpses of the infinite, of complete emptiness, of the divine being.

This is how the bond with the guru is cultivated and nourished. This is the hard work. It is easy to love the guru while we have an idealized image of him or her. But when we get close to the guru, his clay feet are seen, and our many idealized projections of what the guru is, or should be, are shattered, and then the really hard work begins.

This is the crux of the self-inquiry process. The more we strip away our own resistances, the more open and accepting of ourselves and the guru we are. And then the intimacy we so seek with our teacher and ultimately with our own Self is slowly revealed. We can now taste the pure sense of I-AM.

On a parallel thread, there are those who by personality are "doers," and gain recognition and gratification through doing and controlling, while others want to have nothing to do with this aspect of Satsang. These others just want to work on themselves and have nothing to do with organizing Satsang. They just want to come in peace, sit near the teacher, love the teacher, listen to his or her words, internalize them, feel ecstasy with the chanting and in meditation. It is these quiet people, these more shy and introverted people who really "progress" and work their way towards going free.

I am not saying the doers do not progress, for I was a chief doer with Robert and such activities stood me well over time, but the greatest progress happens after you surrender the doing to God, to Consciousness. After three years with Robert, I stopped initiating anything on my own and just waited for Robert to direct me. When Robert left Los Angeles, I stopped doing altogether and just rested in myself.

It is with some of these non-doing people that a teacher tends to spend more time, because he and they feel rapid changes taking place within them, away from the noise of the group. It is also with them that the teacher can be more of him or herself, in his own emptiness, acceptance and love, all held in silence. When some people discover how much time the teacher spends with these people compared with them, they again feel jealous. This is especially the case for the type A doers who are making Satsang healthy and happening. They feel cheated in a sense, they are doing so much for the teacher and the Sangha, but their teacher is spending more time for whatever reason, with someone else who is doing so little in comparison, in their minds and judgment.

You see, it is not a matter of how much time one spends in spiritual activities, but how much time one spends with the guru and within one's own self, and you cannot trade activities to support the sangha with closeness to the teacher. The openness of true surrender is felt by the teacher and automatically attracts him or her. True surrender lights a fire of devotion both in the student and the guru.

What I learned subsequently, but did not know at the time, I needed to better contain my relationships with students so that less was known generally about my relationship with each student. However, the students themselves were always talking to each other about their own relationships with me and with others, so there was no real containing or isolation.

Relevant to this container concept, we need to be aware that none of us ever functions in isolation. If I feel anxious or depressed, just my bearing and presence causes those states to be communicated to others who are sensitive to me. This then "contaminates" their own state, which again becomes communicated to others in a ripple down effect.

Some spiritual people are very empathic. They become energy workers or Reikian therapists. Some are almost telepathic. They can feel even well-hidden emotional states in others, and feel the incongruity of the hidden emotional state, such as hatred, as opposed to how a person expresses himself. The more meditation one does on one's own sense of presence, on the I Am, the more sensitive some people get to these non-expressed emotional states and the energy-presence of others.

I am aggression avoidant. I try to avoid conflict if possible and to smooth over buried conflicts with an attitude of "out of sight, out of mind." However, in such a situation, it will appear to empaths that their concerns and worries are not being addressed and that me, the blind teacher, is

ignoring their very urgent intuition, while I appear to side with the person hiding hatred or ill-intent towards the others. In these situations, the empathic person feels unsafe and unprotected because the teacher has not even acknowledged the truth of what their intuition of danger tells them. In this capacity of ignoring their true intuitions, I failed many, many times.

Thus “reading” the minds and hearts of the Sangha members, above and beyond what they say and do becomes of utmost importance for a teacher, while learning how to deal with these situations becomes increasingly important in an ashram or Satsang setting.

I must admit I have failed many times in my stumbling approach to running a benevolent Sangha, and often have relied on the advice of those I should have ignored. It has been an intense learning experience.

I have since learned more about empathy as this ability has slowly increased in me during the past year. In fact, this talent can be honed and become a Siddhi, a power to be used for good or ill.

When we are really closely attached and bonded, we can even feel the emotional states and energy states of those we love and are close to, over distances even when direct conversations or any communications for that matter, are not taking place. If a loved one is feeling sad, despairing, or radiantly happy, we can feel it. If he or she is in a raging argument with their husband, wife or child, we can feel it, and sometimes feel these emotions as our own and wonder what brought these states on. It can become really confusing for some—the origin or their mental and emotional states.

One can actually “feel” on a deep, intuitive level, which some call the “astral level,” the ebbing and flowing of consciousness itself, as well as how that flow is affecting those we are close to, or the Satsang as a whole. Becoming aware of these energies, flows, and impacts on those we love is really an incredibly interesting and exciting process taking place on the plane of the manifest.

Robert certainly did not deny these levels existed, but only emphasized they should be ignored as irrelevant to one’s own liberation from the manifest world, and all these empathic events are related to the manifest world.

This increased empathy and awareness makes ashram living both easier and more difficult, because life is more subtle and nuanced, and we are more open and influenced by “invisible and unexpressed” affects and flows within consciousness.

The more personal the teacher is, the closer to his or her heart that he allows his students to come, the more intense will be the needs, jealousies and angers, as well as the intensity of love, that these relationships will ignite and sustain.

When the guru is more distant and not so open, all the infighting goes on in the background, if it goes on at all, and few have any sense it is even happening except for a felt sense that a certain situation is odd.

The spiritual process is one of constant deconstructing of one's ego and belief systems and a progressive surrender to the teacher, once you realize that you and the teacher are not separate from the overall process of consciousness "evolving" in and through you. In fact, spiritual "progress" is surrendering to the process of losing what inhibits your awakening, and this is extremely painful and frightening, for example, to let go of your concept of the perfect guru, or how the spiritual process should look.

Many students want the teacher to create a situation where it is easy to wake up, but in fact, it is up to the student to do the work, to practice self-inquiry on why the feelings of wanting to run away are coming up. "Why do they come to me," one should ask. Why am I so angry with the teacher? Why do I feel hatred towards X, Y and Z? What is my part in all this? Why do I believe X but not the teacher, or why do I believe the teacher and not X?

The source of the need to run away is in you, why do you run? Can you just stay with the feelings and not run or not create stories to justify the urge to run or strike out?

You see, in our Sangha, like with Robert's, or Ramana's, or with Nisargadatta, most people are just passing through. So don't worry about what is wrong with the teacher or with the Sangha, because Consciousness is directing everything. You, Robert and I are just small cogs in an unlimited, infinite unfolding of consciousness, and all of our "huge" problems are not even pimples to God.

Yet, because of the apparent hugeness of our problems, we do not trust the unfolding process, and when our problems are not solved, we often fixate on the teacher's failures that has caused us not to progress and go free. It becomes his fault, not ours or that of Consciousness itself; it becomes the Sangha's fault, not ours or that of Consciousness itself, and the role assigned to us by the grand unfolding. We make up stories that block our own self-inquiry and deepening, then we run away from the cooking we ourselves are creating in association with God and guru.

The chaos and cooking people experienced at Robert's Sangha had little to do with Robert. He was just the apparent figurehead.

Only four stayed for the entire 8 years with Robert, and Robert was always looking for those who stayed by him, mostly the quiet ones, who spent much time looking into themselves, reading the transcripts, meditating, or wanting to spend time with the teacher, and surrendering to the process of the unfolding of consciousness through him or her, which the mind cannot see, but the heart can directly intuit, minute by minute.

15 February 2012

Lakshmi and I just after her feeding. You can't hear her, but she is purring away. She feels no stress anymore. No mouth pain, no cancer pain, and just constant gratitude.



Lakshmi appears to be recovering nicely. She is eating almost all her food on her own as opposed through the feeding tube. Her gum inflammation appears way down. Her feces are firming, and the irritable bowel disorder appears subsiding. Unfortunately her feeding tube is blocked, so I may have to take her in today. We need to tube to administer all of her medications. I'll try one more attempt this morning to unblock the tube.

She is back on my lap now purring just as before the surgery.

18 February 2012

Love, Surrender and Awakening

Robert Adams tells of his awakening experience and what followed as below. After that I discuss what his story means to me based on my time with him and my own life since he left us.

Robert:

When I had my spiritual awakening I was fourteen years old. This body was sitting in a classroom taking a math test. And all of a sudden I felt myself expanding. I never left my body, which proves that the body never existed to begin with. I felt the body expanding, and a brilliant light began to come out of my heart. I happened to see this light in all directions. I had peripheral vision, and this light was really my Self. It was not my body and the light. There were not two. There was this light that became brighter, and brighter and brighter, the light of a thousand suns. I thought I would be burnt to a crisp, but alas, I wasn't.

This brilliant light, which I was the center and also the circumference, expanded throughout the universe, and I was able to feel the planets, the stars, the galaxies, as myself. And this light shone so bright, yet it was beautiful, it was bliss, it was ineffable, indescribable.

After a while the light began to fade away, and there was no darkness. There was just a place between light and darkness, the place beyond the light. You can call it the void, but it wasn't just a void. It was this pure awareness I always talk about. I was aware that I am that I am. I was aware of the whole universe at the same time. There was no time, there was no space, there was just the I am.

Then everything began to return to normal, so-to-speak. And I was able to feel, and understand, that all of the planets, the galaxies, the people, the trees, the flowers on this earth, everything, were myriads of energy, and I was in everything. I was the flower. I was the sky. I was the people. The I was everything. Everything was the I. The word I encompassed the whole universe.

Now here's the point I'm trying to make. I felt a love, a compassion, a humility, all at the same time, that was truly indescribable. It wasn't a love that you're aware of.

Think of something that you really love, of someone that you really love with all your heart. Multiply this by a jillion million trillion, and you'll understand what I'm talking about. This

particular love is like no thing that ever existed on this earth, consciously. There is nothing you can compare it with. It is beyond duality, beyond concepts, beyond words and thoughts. And since the I, which I was, was all-pervading, there was no other place for anything else to be.

There was no room for anything, because there was no space, and no time. There was just the I am, ever present, self-existent. The love of everything was the love of the self.

This is why, in scripture, it tells you to love your brother, and your sister, to love everyone and everything under all circumstances. This love couldn't differentiate. It couldn't say, "You're good, so I love you. You're bad, so I don't love you." Everything was going on as myself. I realized I am the murderer, I am the saint, I am the so-called evil on this earth, I am the so called goodness of this earth. Everything was the self. And it was all a game. All of the energy particles changed from one thing to another thing. But the love never changed.

Another word for this love was compassion. There was this fabulous, fantastic compassion. For everything! For everything was the self, the I am. There was no differentiation. There was not me, what you call me, and those things. There was only one expression, and that was consciousness.

Of course, I didn't understand all these words at that time.

There were no words like I'm talking about now. I'm trying my best to speak intelligently and try to use words to explain what happened, but you can't. All the games that people are playing, and all the planets, throughout the universe, is really the self. It was all the self, and I realized that nothing else existed but the self. Yet all of these things, the multiplicities of planets, of galaxies, of people, of animals, were really the self. Again, there are no words to describe this. I felt and knew that these multiplicities do not exist. Things do not exist. Only the self existed, only consciousness, pure awareness.

Yet, at the same time, creation came into existence. And there's no creation. We cannot understand this in human form. As long as we're thinking with our brains it's incomprehensible, for how can they both be simultaneously creating each other? There was creation going on, and yet there was no creation at all! There was no creation taking place, and creation was taking place. Sounds like the thoughts of a mad man. And it seemed normal. There's absolutely nothing strange about this at all, being nothing and everything at the same time.

So this great compassion was there. Since I was everything, the compassion was for everything. No thing was excluded, for the things were really the self.

And then there was this fantastic humility. The love, compassion, and humility are all synonymous. I'm trying to break it down to make you understand, to an extent, what was going on. The humility was there not to change anything. Everything was right just the way it was. Planets were exploding, new planets were being born. Suns were evaporating, new suns were

being born. From the suns the planets came, and then life began on the planets. All this was taking place instantaneously, at the same time. And yet nothing was taking place at all.

Therefore the humility is that everything was alright. There was nothing I had to change. There was nothing I had to correct. The people dying of cancer were in their right place where nobody dies, and there is no cancer. Wars, man's inhumanity to man, was all part of it. There cannot be a creation if there is not an opposite to good. In order to have a creation there has to be opposites. There has to be the bad guy and the good guy. I was able to understand all these things.

The next thing I remember is my teacher was shaking me. I was the only one left in the class, everybody had gone, the bell rang, and I had not even started the mathematics test. Of course I got a great big zero.

But those feelings and the understanding never left me. From that time on my whole life changed. I was no longer interested in school. I was no longer interested in the friends I had. I won't go on any more than that for now, as far as that's concerned.

The point I'm trying to make is this. If the end result of realization is love, compassion, and humility, what if we were able to develop these qualities now? Do you see what I'm getting at? If we are able to develop this love, this beautiful joyous love, for everything, without exception, without being judgmental, and we had a great compassion, for everything, without being judgmental.

Then of course, there's humility. Humility means we don't have to try to straighten things out, to get even, to stick up for our rights, for there is no one really left to do that. If some of us were to work on those aspects, it would lift us up and make us free.

This is something for you to think about. We have to learn to leave the world alone. We become so involved in politics, in family life, in work and the rest of these things we're involved in, that we forget that we only have so many years left on this earth in the body. And what are we doing with all of the time we have? We're spending the time on things that do not really exist, things that make no sense.

Imagine you're in a play in the theater, and you're playing a role, and you're playing a part. All the time you're aware that you're playing a part. You're not really that person. It's only a part you're playing. In the same way you are now playing a part, but you have forgotten you're playing a part.

You think your body, the way it looks, the way it appears, what it does, what it acquires, is real, and you put all your energy into the game of playing the part. This is indeed a waste of energy. If you'd only put your energy in finding the self, that you really never lost. And you can do this by developing the qualities of love, compassion and humility.

This is another method you have to work on. As you're working on self-inquiry, work on the love, work on compassion, work on humility. Do not just practice self-inquiry for a while, and then react negatively to the world, and have your feelings hurt. Be yourself.

Awaken from the dream. Refuse to play any longer. Look at yourself all day long. See the things that you do, the thoughts that you have, the feelings that you have. It makes no difference what situation you're going through. It makes no difference what's going on in your life. The only thing that matters is what's going on inside of you.

Karmically you are put on this earth as a body, to go through karmic experiences. Therefore, the experience you're going through is part of the maya, the karma. Do not reflect on these things. This is important. You have to drop this. Leave it alone. If you only knew that nothing can ever happen to you. There never was a time when you were born.

There will never be a time when you die. You have always lived. You are consciousness. You have always existed. Identify with your existence. Merge into the existence of nothingness. I tell you this again and again. Leave the world alone. Remember what I mean when I say to leave the world alone. I'm not saying that you should voluntarily, consciously, make a plan of how you're going to leave the world alone. You'll not be able to live up to it. By leaving the world alone I mean, entertain in your mind higher thoughts.

Always have in back of your mind, "I am not the body. I am not the doer. I am not the mind." Feel this. Feel it deeply.

Do not feel good or bad about it. Do not try to prolong your life. It's a waste of energy. What you call your life will take care of itself. It knows what to do better than you do.

We're very limited in our understanding about the body, or the affairs of the body, what's going on in the body. Do not try to do anything with your body. Your body will do whatever it came here to do. It knows what to do. Separate your-self from that. Of course, you may do this by inquiring, "To whom does the body come? Who has this body?" and remain in the silence.

Many of us here this evening are making tremendous progress. I've been talking to many of you who are really getting there. Of course, I use all these terms loosely.

There's nowhere to get. But I have to talk to you this way, to remind you to leave yourself alone. I know some of you may be in pain sometimes, and you say, "Well I want to live a life free of pain, therefore I have to do things to myself so I don't feel that pain." This is really a mistake. If you could only realize who has the pain. To whom does the pain come? I have the pain. Then who am I? If I have the pain, it means that the person who is thinking these things does not have the pain, for it is I that has the pain. You are free of pain, for you are not the I-thought. Remember the I we're talking about now is the thought, the I-thought, that has the pain and the

experience of being born, the experience of dying, the experience of having problems. This is the I-thought that has these things. Not you.

You have to vehemently make up your mind that the only thing that matters to you is to become free, liberated, and let go of all the other things that keep you bound. This is why you have to work with love, compassion and humility. For if this is the end result of awakening, if you do this first, the awakening will come faster.

Even while I'm talking to you, some of you are thinking about your body, you're thinking about the mind, you're thinking about your work. This is what keeps you back.

Destroy the thoughts through self-inquiry. Become free. Do not fight. Do not fear. Observe, watch, look, but have no opinions for or against. Some people think if they act this way they will not be able to function in the world. You will function. Always remember, there's an appearance of the body, and the body came here to do certain things, and it's going to do those things. It has absolutely nothing to do with you.

Many times when I talk to you I have to keep from laughing, (laughter) explaining all these things, talking about all these things, when you're already free, and you already know these things. Sometimes we're pulled into the illusion. For there's really no thing.

When I talk of God we're speaking of nothingness. God is nothing. And that nothing is you. We get more deeply involved when we constantly study, when we constantly read about so many spiritual topics, we get more deeply involved in maya which prevents us from waking up.

Why can't you be yourself and wake up? Why do you have to go through all these things, and make me sit here talking to you like this? Just think what I could be doing if I didn't have to talk to you. I could be watching Tales From The Crypt. (Laughter)

Be your self. When you are yourself the thoughts come slowly to you until they cease. When the thoughts become slower and slower into your mind, and the thoughts begin to disappear, you automatically become loving, compassionate and you'll have humility. In other words, the faster you get rid of your thoughts, the faster these other things come, these other qualities. So it's a matter of stopping your thoughts. It is the thoughts that see everything in this world as good and bad, right and wrong. As the thoughts begin to subside, love comes by itself, compassion, humility come by themselves. So again, we have to stop thinking.

DISCUSSION

So, what was Robert's awakening experience? What was it all about?

It was a brief, time-limited transcendental experience wherein Robert perceived himself to be, the sense of I, his sense of I am, to be pure consciousness, and that everything in the universe also was pure consciousness, and was him. In addition, he felt that that an essential characteristic of the I am, of consciousness, was love, a great love far beyond what humans feel towards each other. Along with this, he felt compassion for all sentient beings, for everything that is alive, as well as a great sense of humility.

Then he returned to normal consciousness, but with the belief and conviction that he was consciousness itself, and the basic nature of that consciousness was love, compassion and humility, and a total acceptance of the world when it was.

At the same time, the recognition that he was consciousness itself, the totality, relieved him of the illusion that he was bound by an individual body and mind.

Then Robert proposed one more step and suggests a method.

First, he suggests practicing self-inquiry onto the sense of I, looking ever more deeply into one's own sense of I, or I am. This is the classic self-inquiry process which is the mainstay of both the Ramana tradition of which Robert is a part of, but also of Nisargadatta Maharaj.

Then he states, the feeling that never left him subsequent to his awakening experience, was his deep love for everything and everyone, and a profound sense of humility, and a compassion for all living things.

Then Robert proposes, "What if we work on developing this compassion, this love, this humility here and now before the awakening experience?"

This would be an additional practice to self in query, of looking into that sense of I am gradually becoming that sense of I am in meditation and in everyday self-witnessing, self-awareness.

He says awakening will come more quickly this way. In a sense, he saying "him Fake it till you make it." That is, grab onto the lasting after-effects of the awakening experience.

Deliberately cultivate being kind, develop love for another, feel love for another very deeply and totally and lose ourselves in love. Every day we should cultivate increasing compassion for all living things, for hungry animals, starving babies, towards trees, insects and even rocks and a running river. And at the same time, we lose our arrogance, wanting constantly to bow in complete surrender to one's beloveds, whomever or whatever they may be. We drop our knees in humility. We touch the feet of our beloved. We become like dust in service to those we love. And by such deliberate cultivation of love, humility, compassion and surrender, we build in us a receptivity is for the transcendental awakening experiences, which in a sense, really are no longer necessary because we are already living the fruit of awakening.

For this reason I emphasize loving one another as deeply, as extensively compassionately as possible, until our love for another is so intense and deep that naturally we drop our knees in deep humility surrender.

That is why I recommend human relationships so much, to practice increasing loving this in the most personal and powerful way to open us to the deepest love for sentience, surrender to the unfolding of consciousness in its own way and time. It is a way that the limited becomes the infinite.

By practicing love, compassion, surrender and humility, we take on the cloak of God, until, as Nisargadatta puts it, the I Am, God, Consciousness loves you back and releases you.

Nisargadatta's experience was similar. His guru told him he was not his body and he immediately accepted that. With that conviction he concentrated on his sense of I Am less than three years and had a great awakening, but which is never described.

What I would note though, is that Maharaj grabbed onto one fruit of the awakening experience, that he was not his body. That conviction, along with focus on and love of the I Am, released him from suffering and distress and created one of the great Jnanis of our time.

25 February 2012

Ecstatic Experiences, the I Am, and a Middle way to Awakening

I spent most of the evening last night with two friends, both students now in our tradition.

Both are “energy” workers, healers, and both are highly sensitive to the energies in their bodies, and the always-changing “colors” of their constant “I Am” experience. Normally in such Darshan situations, I feel the intensity of energy experiences in myself, the feelings of bliss and love which gradually transform into ecstasy, which itself starts as a flowing energetic movement, to a stasis, a stillness.

Sometimes the ecstasies turn visible, the feeling itself become light, consciousness itself begins to shine in its own illumination. Or sometimes, I feel deep within my sense of presence, an energy “dynamo” of light, like an intense column of light from beneath me to above me, passing through my presence into the Void above and below.

But last night, as each expressed their own experiences, I felt an arising of their bliss in me. I was no longer the source, but I felt theirs too, and it vibrated within me, expanding and blowing up my experience.

One person, Marcus, talked of his new freedom and being now able to follow his own heart and experience great excitement and “fun” just being himself. As he talked louder and faster, an ecstatic bliss arose in me and I shared his happiness, and became as if “drunk” with the arising ecstasy, becoming totally unfunctional, hardly able even to speak. I was aware of myself smiling and moving my right hand in a spontaneous Mudra following his bliss.

The woman, Samantha, was more empty, even more ecstatic and simply quiet. She too was overtaken by the bliss and an awareness of the Void that permeates all, which she called “impersonal love” for the source of everything, the Void or emptiness which we are at rest. The man referred to her as his Shakti; she was the source and inspiration for him and in him for the arising of bliss and ecstasies.

Even while this was going on, in this three-way ecstatic state, we talked of the highest spiritual truths that we had discovered, he while leading an ashram for another bhakti-oriented teacher for many years, she in experiences with him and with her clients, and with me, and I with my experiences with my own beloveds and in Satsang.

We talked about how we were able to “intuit” or feel the presence of significant others over a great distance, especially those whom we love deeply. But even those who are not usually so close to us, we can still feel their moods, distresses, or love and happiness, and this connection has been verified many, many times. Thus we become clearly aware of the One-nature of the Self that operates through each of us within the container of the Void.

We also become aware that often we are “contaminated” by others with whom we are not in direct contact. Sometimes it feels as if a strange mood overtakes us, one of having a sudden urge to read books on mysticism, such as Joseph Campbell, or of myths and archetypes. Other times we feel a strange sense of distress with an intense urgency to understand or do something, that does not seem like us. Later we find out that someone else we both know was experiencing that state with a first person urgency at exactly the same time. Somehow we “feel” their states, even though we are rarely in direct contact, but only are exposed through a common relationship with a third person. Again, we are all connected, and susceptible to “contamination” of moods and experiences of others through sort of “astral” connections and bondings.

After about an hour of this Darshan, of this spiritual meeting in truth with each other, we all sank entirely out of our minds and heads into a direct “heart” experience of each other and the world.

No more talking was necessary or desired. Words became funny things to be laughed at hysterically. The world was ultrabright and vivid, and our bodies and sense of presence was filled with a palpable yet light sense of love and wellbeing, and a deep peace of resting in nothingness.

This is what I told them, “This is the state to be in, resting in one’s own sense of I Am or Self, living in the bliss of I Am, which dissolves into the incredible peace of the Void, realizing one’s own emptiness nature. It is so incredibly easy to reach this state once you learn how to stop thinking and just let your center of awareness settle into your deep sense of presence, which usually—at first—feels identical with an inner, energetic spiritual heart in the body.

Just shut up; stop asking questions and searching for answers to hypothetical spiritual questions about method or the ontology of consciousness. Just get out of your head and settle into your heart. Learn to follow your heart. Once you learn how, it is easy. Just stay there as long and often as possible, and all spiritual questions and emotional/physical distresses will be resolved, by following and being in your heart. No more books are necessary, no more seeking is necessary, no more methods or teachers are necessary. Just stay in and operate from your heart. Eventually all your questions and problems will be answered and resolved by this inner working of consciousness.”

From this state true awakening will come. This state is not awakening itself, but the place where the absolute meets manifestation. From this state, the Absolute in you will realize both the empty

and ecstatic nature of all of manifestation, but that YOU are entirely beyond the manifest, beyond existence, the knower of knowing and also of unknowing, the container of all.

Then, with this certain knowing, you can return to the world of the ridiculous, the world of pain and pleasure, the world of suffering pain, but also of love and bliss; you can return in peace and acceptance.

Many people have experienced similar states and understanding in Satsang with me or in conversation, meditation, or in sharing our mutual presence. Yet, they are looking for something else. Many students come with a head filled with ideas about what a guru is or their path is, and they miss this, they miss the ecstasies or the truths revealed by both what the ecstasies teach, and the revelations by consciousness to the Absolute in you what the true nature of consciousness is.

As the woman, Samantha, said to me. “People come filled with ideas, concepts and expectations, and entirely miss what they could receive in Satsang or in the Sangha.” They miss because their minds tell them that this is not enough, it is too simple. Or else they have ideas that the “ego” has to die, or be burnt out, etc., and they are only one way for them to do it.

Yes, there are many, many paths, like that of the true bhakti who loses himself, burns himself out in a dualistic worship and love for God or guru, and are finally felt and left as empty, humble and identical with emptiness itself.

Or there is the way of the Jnani with meditative self-inquiry following the sense of I into the Void. The Jnana too is eventually left empty. Or like most, there is the way of endless exploration within the deep fields of consciousness, the exploration of which is endless and exciting to the mind. But this path really has no end point unless and until the student sickens of endless experiences and understandings, and wishes to finish the journey with ultimate experiences and understandings.

Or, there is this simple middle way, finding one’s own sense of I Am and loving it, worshipping it, while loving God or another deeply, which excites and fills the I Am with love and ecstatic energies which makes one’s spiritual practice all so easy compared to the dryness of the Jnani or the constant burning of the Bhakti. The middle way of loving the I Am and loving another, and loving that other results in an explosive love within one’s own sense of presence. This is the easy way, the simple way, the way I learned from Robert and Nisargadatta.

The three of us are thinking of having a mini retreat to add sacred music, chanting, and meditation to the simple mutual Darshan experience we had with each other, and then at some point hold a retreat for our Sangha. Marcus is a talented musician and singer, so that we will have live music and chanting as opposed to canned music and silently listening as we had at our former Satsangs.

The retreats probably will be held at Mt. Baldy Zen Center about 60 miles West of Los Angeles, high on the slopes of Mt. Baldy. The mountain itself has three separate peaks, and the one that the Zen Center is located on is called “Thunder Mountain” because of the sound of the constant wind between the peaks.

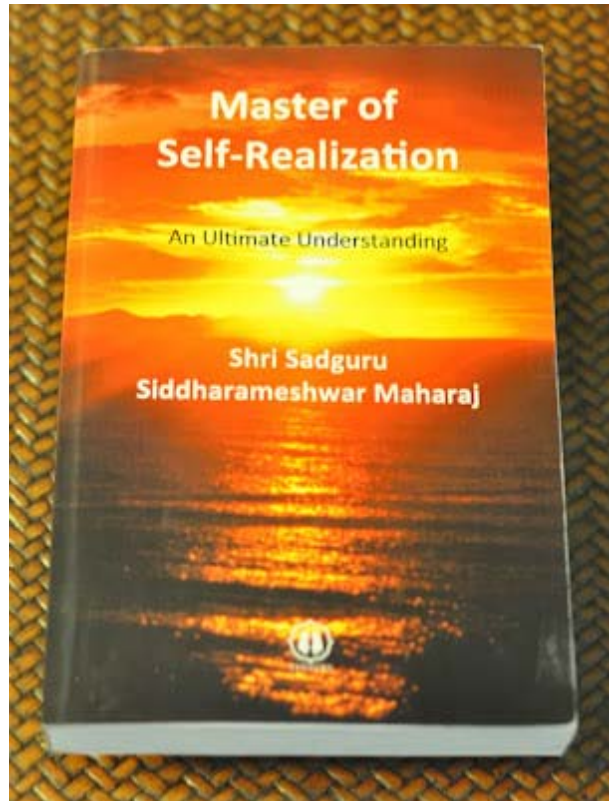
Those who may be interested in sharing a retreat, please contact me.

28 February 2012

Lakshmi Is doing well now. Gaining weight rapidly and has become triply affectionate since I feed her 3-4 times a day by her feeding tube. She is very contented. I did not place her on my chest. She now climbs up to my face all the time, and just purrrs.



29 February 2012



One of the best books on self-inquiry.

The book on the left is a must read for anyone interested in self-inquiry.

If you read Robert or my posts or books on self-inquiry, you notice we talk only about the method: how to practice self-inquiry and how to abide in the I Am. Part of the reason is not to contaminate or influence what you will find or your experiences.

This book talks about the all-important ontology of self, which is the philosophical explanation of the nature of consciousness as well as of awareness, which is only one aspect of consciousness. It discusses in great detail the various levels of "bodies" found in the manifest world, from the gross physical body, to the subtle body of mind and intellect, to the causal body of the Void in its various aspects of experience and unknowingness, to finally, the underlying "supracausal" body, or Turiya.

This book is helpful for those people who "need to know" where they are going. It provides an intellectual and experiential perspective to make the exploration less scary in anticipation, but also it offers the potential of taking something from your own exploration and adding his. However, this indeed is the almost universal teaching style of both East and West.

The book has several parts including a transcription by Nisargadatta of his teacher's talks during the 1930s after he took notes during lectures. Basically, the major part of the book is his telling what his teacher said.

You will find this information embedded in many of Nisargadatta's books, but you will enjoy this book as the source for all his teachings can be found here.

The book is available through Amazon at the following link for \$22.50:

http://www.amazon.com/Master-Self-Realization-Sadguru-Siddharameshwar-Maharaj/dp/0578027895/ref=sr_1_sc_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1330546945&sr=1-1-spell

As an example, from page 31:

Suppose we lose the concept of possession or the gross body, as well as the subtle body, and admit to the fact that the [mind/body] bundle belongs to a stranger [the I] Still, we must find the answer to the question "Who am I?"

Let us now go over the definition of causal body. What is the causal body? As soon as we step in here, there is pitch darkness everywhere. Is it possible that this dark ignorance (representing both the unconscious and unknowing states) is the place of residence for this "I"? It surely seems this is his main headquarters. Ignorance seems to be the main property or quality that belongs to him. There is certainly some hope of finding the elusive "I" here.

There seems nothing that can be called "mine" in this place. Everything seems to be absolutely quiet. That "I" who loudly proclaims "I, I" so arrogantly in the gross and subtle bodies, seems to be totally silent here. The "I" seems to be playing hide and seek so that he does not get caught by the one who searches for it. In the causal body the "I" seems to have dug itself into a trench of darkness so that the one making the search might fall in, being forced in his search.

After stabilizing in this darkness of a causal body, and firmly planting one's feet. For some period of time, a voice is softly heard that says, "I am the witness of this." With this, there arises

some courage offering the hope of catching the thief called "I." With the recognition of this voice who says it is the witness of the ignorance, there also comes a thought, "This thief is here somewhere. It may be here, or little bit further ahead, but he is witnessing the ignorance from somewhere nearby." Here the searching takes the form of watching persistently. The witnessing that is going on is happening from beyond the emptiness of the causal body, from position of the great causal body, or Turya state. When this is understood, the "I" is quickly overjoyed in finding himself. Who can describe that joy?

The one who says "I" is really the all-witnessing Brahman. It is he, who is of the nature of knowledge, of the sense of "I am." When this certainty is established, there arises wave after wave of bliss.

Afterwards with this list ebbs away, look at the miracle that happens. One arrives at the recognition that, "I am not even of the nature of knowledge, for just as I am covered with ignorance, in the same way, I am covered with knowledge. I was not originally having any ignorance or knowledge. Ignorance and knowledge were born out of me, and were mistakenly taken to be me. With the aid of such deep thought, it can be seen that the rising of both ignorance and knowledge within, points to me as their creator. Therefore knowledge is my child, and I am a father, and as his father, I am prior to and different from that knowledge."

With this sequence of deep discriminative thought, dawns within the sense that "I am Brahman," or the Turya state, also starts ebbing away, only to finally be fully eradicated.

Then, "I" am absolutely naked, without any coverage whatsoever. There is no knowledge and no ignorance. Arriving here in this nakedness, it cannot be described as to who or what this "I," is. If you want a description of the "I" found here, you may utter any work found in any dictionary, but that is not "I." You may utter words and sentences to try to describe it, but those are not it. If you do not understand what is being told now, you must leave off words and concepts, and merge in deep silence, and see who "I" am.

I will continue to post and comment on material from this book, but I urge all of those who have asked questions about self-inquiry and self-abiding to buy the book. This puts you a little ahead of the game, even though it will also color your future experiences and understanding.

However, the ultimate understanding that you are That which the principle that stands behind knowledge and ignorance, which together are the ground of beingness, is the ultimately liberating understanding. Then you can let go of all seeking and knowing, just resting in your own self-nature bereft of thought.

01 March 2012

Pure Knowledge; Pure Knowing; Satchitananda

Jnana yoga, or pure Advaita, is all about the experience of unadulterated knowledge, or truth in its purest form. Everyone experiences hearing words were someone talks, and having a feeling that what this person is saying is true. This is has happened for thousands of years with all kinds of great teachers, gurus, Saints, but also charlatans and lying politicians.

But sometimes truth is experienced in its purest form, unconditioned, unadulterated, and it shoots through one's body and psyche like a bolt of lightning energizing us. The analogy presented by Siddharameshwar, is that you can be exposed to many kinds of sweets, such as chocolates, a milkshake, tapioca, and many other foods that are sweet, but can never extracted from those various experiences, the underlying sweetness of sugar found in those various foods. Only when you taste pure sugar, will you ever and always recognize the sweetness of sugar found in all those other foods. Siddharameshwar is stating that there is a state of unconditioned, pure knowledge, or Turya, which when experienced directly, provides the experience of pure truth, which can never be forgotten. This too is not awakening, but a time and state before awakening where we experience the thrill, energy, and bliss of knowing unconditioned, pure and absolute truth. (Which belongs as the primary property of the fourth state, Turya, the supra causal body, also known and experienced as Satchitananda, or existence, knowledge, bliss.

In "Master of Self-Realization" Siddharameshwar states:

Now, we will see what the fourth body, the Great Causal Body, is. The Great Causal Body is also known as the Turya state, or Satchitananda. It is called the great causal state because it is above, or beyond the limits of the causal body. It is the father of the other three bodies. It indicates a state of consciousness that is without a body in spite of the fact that the body still exists. This is the state of "knowledge" in the fourth body. In Hindu mythology, King Janaka was such a one without a body. He had a daughter named Janaki, meaning awareness. Out of him, the daughter Janaki (awareness) is created. Compared with the previous three bodies, the fourth body is a state that is without a body, and without any conditions in the form of knowledge. This does not mean that there is an absence of knowledge found in the previous three bodies.

Knowledge is the same whether it is in an agitated condition or in equanimity. Is clean and pure the state of equanimity as well as it is termed it is, even when immersed in a flood of objective knowledge. In all states, knowledge is one and the same. However the knowledge in the first three bodies is adulterated knowledge, or conditional objective knowledge. The Knowledge of the State of the Great Causal Body is balanced and can be experienced as "pure knowledge."

This illustrates why Knowledge cannot be experienced in its primal state in the first three bodies because it is always in some form of conditioning. In the first three bodies it will always be experienced only as objective knowledge. In the fourth body, that knowledge is nonobjective and pure, which is not apparent in the other three bodies, and shines in its pure nature. This is why aspirants have to be taken to the great causal body.

Even when each state comes and goes, the witness of these states does not come and go anywhere. The one who sees the dark and fair complexion, as well his childhood, youth and old age of the physical body, is also the one who sees all concepts, imaginings, dreams, and doubts of the subtle body. The same witness also sees the causal body where there is a complete absence of concepts, imagination, and doubt. The one who witnesses all three of these bodies is forever awake.

Once the nature of "witnessing knowledge That" is known, the state of ignorance vanishes completely. Though it is true that ignorance vanishes, it is not true that the appearance of the "the seen," or "the world," also vanishes. It is only the attitude, or the understanding of the aspirant that changes. By virtue of the intensity of study, we will experience that all that is seen in and appears, is in the form of "knowledge." When it is known that everything that exists is only "the LORD OF THE UNIVERSE" the visible universe is not destroyed, just as when the light of the lamp destroys darkness, the objects that become known do not vanish. The nature of the objects simply became clearly known in the light. In the same way, when we are looking at and feeling the world with blind eyes in the darkness of ignorance, the Sadguru's advice brings correct vision to our sight.

When the Flame Of Knowledge is lived in the "Inner-Consciousness," it spreads light all around, and the darkness of ignorance is destroyed, yet the world appearance remains, as its true nature is uncovered and revealed.

At this point, the first part of the exposition teaching, and everything regarding the physical gross body up to the great causal body has been included. The next part of the teaching that is given after the explanation of the great causal body, is the teaching of the final reality. A person cannot be called acidic even if he gain self-knowledge by becoming identified with great causal body, the Turya state, Satchitananda, and has realized that state. Even though he is accomplished, he still looked upon only as an aspirant. However we will not discuss that state yet at this point.

02 March 2012

The "I AM," as the supreme Knowledge (Truth) before knowledge is transcended

I have heard complaints on Facebook that people did not understand the quotes in my last two posts regarding the various states of consciousness Siddharameshwar was talking about in Master of Self-Realization.

You must understand this is not a textbook of economics or mathematics. You cannot understand this material with your mind. Don't use your mind. Don't try to figure out what is being said. What we call the mind is one of many properties of what Siddharameshwar calls the subtle body, which is the second body of mind and intellect. That which is beyond the mind and intellect, cannot be comprehended by the mind. Objective knowledge of the world, even the so-called spiritual world, such as knowledge of the astral planes, kundalini flows, the sciences both soft and hard, psychology and psychoanalysis, cannot touch the two higher bodies of emptiness or the void, and the supra-causal body, otherwise known as Turya, or the "I Am."

Read the quotes very slowly. Then stop. Let the quotes rattle around in your brain and gradually settled deeper. Then go back and read paragraph by paragraph, one paragraph at a time. Stop after each paragraph and just sit with the contents. Do this for each paragraph. Then go back and start all over again. Read each paragraph sentence by sentence. Stop after each sentence and let the meaning penetrate deeply. Then go into meditation. Stop reading altogether. Just sit in silence and let the truth of these words sink deeper into your psyche and into your heart.

The correct way to read a master of Jnana, or of Bhakta for that matter, is to be as silent as possible. Don't try to manipulate these concepts with your mind. Don't try to figure out the meaning. Just read the text and let it settle into your heart. The more advanced you are, when you read, the more silent, open and receptive you will be. Do not read with the greedy mind that wants to grasp and process concepts and give them back to other people on Facebook. This is your final spiritual pursuit. This is not a toy to throw around and pitch in the air for everyone to see how well you've learned concepts. This is not a game where you learned concepts to show everyone how advanced you are or smart you are. This is your life's blood. Read the text as if it's the last one you will ever read. Let it penetrate you deeply. Drop the mind and receive the text within your heart.

Then you will clearly see, that when the text mentions the "causal body" it is not talking about a literal body. It is more a state of mind or level of consciousness. Even these concepts do not

really fit the reality that you perceive when you go deep. Don't think too much about the meaning. Just let it sink in. Just imagine this is going to take you 1000 years to understand so don't wind yourself too tightly. Love and acceptance will show you the way as well as trust in the text and your teachers.

In the section beginning on page 55 of the Master of Self-Realization, Siddharameshwar talks in more detail about the great causal body, the Turya state, otherwise known as the "I am." He states:

Now we will see how knowledge arises in these four bodies. To gain the knowledge of objects with sight through the gross body, it is implied that all of the four bodies are instrumental in bringing this about. The physical eyes alone cannot see an object without the help of the subtle eye of the intellect. For example, we see a mango, or have the knowledge that this is a mango, but what would happen if we were only to see what the physical eyes alone see? Of course, the physical eyes should also see the object is a mango. However, behind the physical I is the subtle eye of the intellect whose help is sought to know the mango.

(Comment: this is rather obvious. If a 10th century Norman or Saxon man were to "see" a 2012 Toyota Camry, he would have no idea what it was for her about. He would have no concept of how it ran, or less he found the ignition that ran at all. It would be a complete mystery to him. Thus without the intellect, and an accretion of objective knowledge, the Camry would not be seen at all. It would only be a metal and glass lump.

In the same way, while the eye can see the mango or an orange, it takes experience in the mind to recognize that these are edible fruits.)

However, even this combination of the physical eye and the subtle intellect is not sufficient. If these two do not have the support of the causal body, the intellect is dead. The causal body functions in various ways, like space, sky, the void, distance, etc. The intellect needs the background of space in order to function (as a container). So, now there is the eye, the intellect, and the space in the form of the causal body, but if there is no witness in the form of the great causal body (consciousness; the "I am") to connect these three, there is no knowledge of anything.

Thus in order to get the knowledge of objects, it is necessary for all four of these bodies to be present. If we look progressively from one body to another, it needs to be pointed out that in order to know the activity or changes in the subtle body, the physical body is not necessary. Additionally, the activity or changes that occur in the subtle body such as attraction and repulsion, thirst and hunger, and pleasure and pain, can only be known through the aid of the causal and great causal bodies. Looking in the other direction, in order for knowledge to rise in

the causal body, the help of the gross and subtle body is not required. At this stage in the explanation, it must be made clear that knowledge on any level is always dependent on the great causal body, the I Am.

For gaining knowledge in the causal body, the elements of the subtle body, mind, intellect, thinking, prana (which would also include kundalini and other kinds of energies circulating within the body and one's sense of presence) and the senses, are of absolutely no use. The elements of the subtle body only have influence over the gross and subtle bodies. The field of the causal body is entirely different from the gross and subtle bodies, and nothing from them can ever step into it. The question arises, "If this is the case, how can one enter into great causal body?" It is a fact that the scope of the mind and intellect is limited only to the subtle body and they do not have the capacity to enter the further two bodies, the causal body and the great causal body.

Him

It must be stated that knowledge of the great causal body, I Am, Turya is absolutely self-sufficient. It stands on its own, (like the sweetness of sugar, unadulterated), and has no dependency or expectation of help from the previous three bodies. This knowledge is self luminous. By way of analogy, even though the eye sees all objects, no object can see the eye. Similarly, nobody is capable of seeing this King of Knowledge (which is the "I Am"), which is the eye of the eye.

This knowledge proves its own existence only by its own luminosity. Even though the I cannot see itself, anyone who has eyes never has doubts as to whether he has eyes are not. He can see because he has eyes. This type of certainty naturally abides in him. Similarly, one has knowledge of oneself while witnessing someone or something other than oneself. In order to see our eyes, we need a mirror in order to see the reflection of the eyes. That objective knowledge is only the reflected knowledge of the eyes. However, the knowledge of the great causal body proves its own existence by witnessing everything other than itself. For its proof of existence, no other evidence is required.

(Comment: this is what Rajiv and I mean by the term "apprehension," or to apprehend. We know of our own existence as certainty, even when we are not consciously aware, such as in the deep sleep state, by a deep intuitive knowledge that we always exist, which becomes greater and stronger a conviction, the more aware we are of this apprehension of our omnipotence.)

This knowledge of the great causal body is "all pervading," and yet it is as if it were invisible from the ignorant beings point of view. Instead of seeing the knowledge of the great causal body, for him the gross body, which in proportion is like a poppy seed in the ocean, has become the biggest thing of all. It has become a habit that when looking at smaller thing, that which is objective, we forget the bigger thing, that which is subjective. We abandon that which is self-

proving and self-sufficient, and praise artificial things. It is like when words of praise are given to beautiful electric lights, yet we fail to give the same praise to the light of the sun, or will we look at pictures painted on a wall we forget the wall itself.

What actually happens in this process is that in spite of the fact that the pervading substance is infinitely bigger, when we pay attention to the pervaded object, we forget the pervading substance. The gross is pervaded by the subtle, and the subtle is pervaded by the causal, and the causal pervaded by the great causal (consciousness, knowledge, "I am"). The knowledge of the great causal body cannot be seen because everyone's attention is focused on the gross and that which is objective. When the focus of the aspirant widens, becoming that which is all-pervading, then one will have the vision of truth, the infinite knowledge that covers and you and envelops the vastness space.

Although the knowledge that abides in the great causal body is the destroyer of the causal body (ignorance), it cannot destroy the gross and subtle bodies. The ordinary and superficial objective knowledge that is gained through the mind and the physical body is not the destroyer of ignorance. Only that extraordinarily unique knowledge of the great causal body, is the opponent of ignorance. Ignorance is actually sustained by ordinary objective knowledge (which includes all of the "objective knowledge" of religion and conventional spirituality, New Age spirituality, the sciences and paranormal sciences, academia, psychology, etc.)

Just as the gross and subtle body's inherent activities function for and ignorant man, these activities also continue to function for the Jnani after he has gained self-knowledge.

(Comment: this is exactly what Robert Adams says in his "confessions of the Jnani, where Robert states:

I am infinite, imperishable, self luminous, self existent.

I am without beginning and end.

I am , birthless, deathless, without change or decay.

I permeate and interpenetrates all things. In the period of universes of thought creation, I ALONE AM.)

03 March 2012

Beyond Turya, beyond consciousness, Devotion after Liberation

Before I get into Siddharameshwar's discussion of Para-Brahman, (or Paramatman) or that which is beyond Turya, beyond the great causal state, beyond Brahman, beyond knowledge, which is truly yourself in every way, I stumbled upon this one chapter written by Nisargadatta based on one of Siddharameshwar's talks called Freedom and Devotion. Here he talks about the dryness of awakening, versus the wetness and bliss of devotion after awakening. This is from page 310 of the Master of Self-Realization:

“There is no useful way to freedom than to be in the company of Saints. When you see any form, any object, there arises some sentiment. When you see the guru, to have his glimpse or Darshan, the heart is overflowing with that feeling of reverence. In this way saintly company is the greatest. With respect to the saintly company, being near the Sadguru is the most purifying. Illusion has no place near him. Illusion does not remain in the proximity of the Sadguru. Most people live their lives in pain and give importance useless worldly benefits, only to become miserable and anxious. The individual foolishly gives importance to objective things, which are not important at all, and remains ensnared by illusion. But when one is in the vicinity of his sadguru, such useless distractions automatically disappear.

Uddhava said to Lord Krishna, “Liberation, or the state of Jivanmukta is not a happy state, although you may say so. Therefore, give me devotion to you. I do not want liberation, which is dry and tasteless. Liberation is possible by the blessing of the Sadguru, and it is necessary to have the understanding of reality. But please, give me devotion to you. Give me the worship of you which is superior to the liberation. In the past you bestowed upon many only liberation, but you did not give them this devotion to you. Please, with me, this deception will not do. Please bless them with your devotion, those who have attained real knowledge. Those who have neglected devotion to the guru declare that they have attained liberation are deluded. Please, give us devotion to the guru. Do not tell me that devotion to the guru is not necessary. You are able to make possible that which is impossible, and make impossible that which is possible. You have given liberation even to animals in the forest we only leave, and you have given liberation even to the cow herds (Gopis) who became so sacred that even their creator, Brahman, worshiped them. Unfathomable is the greatness of your devotion. He who becomes one with you holds all of your glory. Devotion contains within itself liberation. By devotion, liberation become sanctified. Even if I gain liberation, I desire only to be your devotee.”

(Comment: when I read this, I felt Robert appeared before me, and I felt utter surrender to his presence, with complete love.)

And so speaking, Uddhava held the feet of Lord Krishna with reverence. He would not let go. And God blessed him. "When the state of the totality of Brahman is attained, one thinks that devotion with its inherent duality is no longer needed. One should not suffer from pride of having achieved such a state. When one says that when liberation is attained, devotion does not remain, this is the pride of knowledge. Please, give me devotion to you. For me, to be deprived of devotion to the guru is the greatest hindrance. So please give me that devotion which is beyond liberation."

(Comment: the following is a very important paragraph which relates the concept of devotion after liberation as being identical to the state of Paramatman, which is beyond Brahman, beyond Turya, beyond the great causal body, and is also the power that knows the way, that makes the universe unfold the way it should as Robert continually talked about.)

Devotion after liberation is the power of Brahman. The power Brahman and devotion are not two things. When there is realization of one's self as Brahman, the state of being an individual, or Jiva vanishes. Paramatman is the only existence. To remain in this state of Paramatman is this devotion after liberation. The individual, the Jiva is full of fear. It is afraid. However, God, Shiva, does not fear anything. Be fearless. And that you, yourself are God, and then what is the cause for fear? To be unafraid is liberation and to enjoy that state is devotion. Fearlessness means not being afraid of anybody or anything. That is the real state of godhood, in which you always lived. You always lived in the state of Paramatman. This is called devotion after liberation. This means to live in our own glory. Those who are real incarnations of God know this devotion, and they are devoted to God after attaining freedom.

Notice what Siddharameshwar is saying here, liberation is recognition of the fourth state, Turya, or the great "I am." However, there is one more step which is devotion to that "I Am," and with that continuous devotion to the identity of the totality with me the I, comes complete freedom to be as you are, which in real life means a constant surrender to that which is, a peacefulness towards the unfolding of the way.

"Liberation itself is not a happy state." This was my experience too in my second awakening, where I saw that nothing in the manifest world, within the states of consciousness, touched me. When I told Robert this, he stated, "Do you feel happy now, completely happy?"

I actually lied to him. I did not want to tell him that I did not feel this happiness he spoke of. I let him think that I did. But my state was not of happiness, or bliss, it was just a recognition of what I was not, which did eventually result in a complete self-confidence in my understanding. Yet, I had not obtained the state of devotion after liberation. That came much, much later when I learned how to love God through his manifestations, which Siddharameshwar talks about in other parts of the text.

Clearly this book is one of the most remarkable texts I have ever read. It has struck me as deeply as the works of Nisargadatta when I first encountered him 25 years ago. Here the origin of the crystal clarity and boldness of Nisargadatta is clearly revealed in Siddharameshwar's teachings. The source of Nisargadatta's love for his teacher Siddharameshwar is made evident here, which allowed his boldness to function in every moment. In Nisargadatta, you see me the same boldness and sense of omnipotence, that you find in a great Zen master who is completely at home in himself. Zen Master Seung Sahn Soen Sa referred to this as being 100% sure of yourself, always walking forward boldly, not wobbling, not checking one's own mind to see if he or she is going in the right direction or has the right attitude. From moment to moment, you react to the world in an entirely appropriate way, but only because you love the world as you love yourself.

14 May 2012

A New Way of Teaching

Again, I have been quiet for a while. Now that I have read Siddharameshwar's Master of Self-Realization, I am aware both of the strengths and weaknesses of the Advaita approach.

One strength is that it is a model that provides a complete ontology and epistemology about the human condition, focuses on what is important, which is self-realization versus other kinds of spiritual knowledge or of attaining siddhas, and provides the method of following or abiding in the I-sense, the I Am.

However, one weakness of Advaita (and Zen) is that it misses the human condition that still binds most seekers, and tries to cast it off rather than use it to energize awakening. Traditional Advaita, at best, urges one to love one's family and children, but to concentrate on the I-sense, follow it downwards into the depths of consciousness, to the deepest layer of consciousness, Turiya, and then even surpass that to utter silence, the Void of Voids.

The other even stronger weakness is that it is a simple-to-understand model with enormous power to gratify one's thirst to know and to understand. One reads Nisargadatta or Siddharameshwar, and immediately the mind halts and one feels awe. It is so easy to make the mind rest when it hears these deep truths.

Like Einstein's General Theory, it is so beautiful, eloquent, and complete, one rests in a state of pure knowing.

Yet, this knowing is still of the mind. It does not penetrate deeper into one's consciousness to the deeper levels of Samadhi, or guide you through to the levels of knowing nothing, becoming nothing, wherein all knowledge is shed and you become simple and humble.

You see, the traditional Advaita is so powerful, just reading it generates profound states of understanding in some, with profound "opening" experiences, that one often feels they have gone all the way and have a complete understanding. Very often they become very arrogant, filled with spiritual knowledge, which they begin to announce to everyone they know.

Thus is born the Facebook and other Internet gurus and also the guru-bashers, who smell the arrogance of knowledge, or the falseness of those who proclaim their utter purity and divine love. One can feel that these teachers lack humility and a certain humanness and loudly

proclaim an impersonal state, or of a divine and impersonal love for all. One feels in their presence, the lack of the human touch, of mortality, and simple humility. They are teachers, and everyone should listen to their truth, and believe their impersonal love is deep and true.

It is so hard for many to ever escape this trap of understanding and embodying an impersonal, universal love.

There is another way of teaching that I think is more powerful and without the weaknesses of Advaita. I should also include Zen and Tibetan Buddhism with Advaita, because they beget similar problems as Advaita, and also miss the transforming power of human love. You will not find love in Zen, believe me.

This other way is by direct transmission of transformative shakti, and also just being in the presence of the guru in Satsang and Darshan, being in the presence of truth and manifest love.

This is why I hung around gurus for many years, looking for truth in them which I felt I lacked. This is why I spent 8 years with Robert, because I could feel it in him. I felt his “beyond this worldliness,” and its draw was infinitely powerful. To be around him and feel knowledge and knowingness drop away into the peaceful holding grace of nothingness brought such peace. One can certainly feel the draw of the Great silence, the stateless state beyond even Turiya, which is the ground state of the Self, the feeling that core that penetrates through and permeates all other states of consciousness, like the waking, dream and sleep states, as well as the mind with all its knowing, and impulses, as well as the physical body, and even the awakening Shakti itself.

Yet, one always feels there is something lacking following this path, a feeling of love and the terrible power of love to twist and turn you into a thriving, flowering plant, or by its lack, into a shriveled leaf. I am talking about human love, the love for another, which in its deepest form is really love of the Self, for itself, both in oneself, where the love arises and is felt, but also love for the Self that is felt and experienced in the “Other.”

I saw it in Robert. Robert was always seeking personal love because he said it grounded him and kept him in the world. What he meant was that love of the self turned inward resulted in a Ramana, benevolent and impersonal, but love of the self turned outwards, brought a transformative power both to the guru and to those who loved him or her.

Yes, Robert loved me. I could feel it all the time. But he also sought the love of a woman to ground himself, to excite and energize that Self-layer of his, as well as energize the Self-knowing quality in the woman. We men students were largely left out of the masculine/feminine transformation around Robert, and most felt the Void and beyond, which can become very, very dry.

I truly believe that one is OFTEN best served by having a guru of the opposite sex, for it can use human love as a transformative energy, a sort of conscious or unconscious Tantra.

I do not want to digress too much in this area, it is only an example of what I saw over 40 years of being around countless gurus: human love in all its forms is an essential part of the best sorts of transformation. It always will destroy the arrogance of knowledge that Advaita and Tibetan Buddhism can bring, as well as the Zen arrogance of knowing nothing. Love, human love as between lovers, or the guru/chela, is humbling and transformative.

Therefore, I think there is a more powerful way of teaching than teaching Advaita or Zen or other forms of Buddhism, and that is direct transmission, outside of the teachings, through respect and love, mostly in silence, while being in the presence of the teacher—someone who has realized the Self.

I admit I totally poooh-pooohed such a way of teaching in the past, because it lacked knowingness, understanding, and a method. The only method was to be in the presence of the guru, and lacking that, of a highly evolved lover.

This is the model of Muktananda and currently, Amma, the hugging guru.

I saw Amma several times before I met Robert and felt nothing from her, but I saw the profound impact she had on many. I dismissed her and her approach then as not for me. Also, for me, Muktananda was the same: a silly old man with no particular teachings, or anything else going for him, but who also had an enormous impact on thousands of students through his shakti.

But I see the trap of knowledge and knowingness so easily sprung on Advaita and Buddhist students, which I have seen at work in our own Sangha. Thus from now on, I will emphasize “Truth” less, and the need for love, both personal and impersonal, and for physical presence, more, much more.

19 May 2012

I get so many comments from folks telling me I totally do not understand Advaita, spirituality in general, awakening, Robert or Ramana, Nisargadatta, or anything else for that matter.

So many people seem to know Robert better than I did and they tell me so.

But very few were with Robert, maybe none that comment here.

Yes, Robert was not of this world. Even his wife Nicole said that even after knowing him for 40 years, she expected a flying saucer to land some day and take him away, back to “his” world.

I can attest to that.

But you have to understand Robert was also human. He feared dentists. He spread rumors which constantly roiled his sangha. He played tricks on people, and lots of other things.

So many people have concepts about gurus, what they are like, what they should be like, what powers they have, etc. Every one of these images and concepts will prevent you from truly seeing and accepting the teacher for what he or she really is, and will prevent you, therefore, from seeing who you are, because the one discrimination begets the other.

Robert always denied he gave Shaktipat, but we could always feel the Shakti in his presence. The Shakti element was strong even as his body weakened. He always denied he did anything energetically with his students, but we all felt the energy from him and in us. To this day I still feel it as a presence within me.

Robert was a vessel for Shakti. It had its own will and way, he was not the doer and he knew it.

Some people think he could mind read them, that all gurus had that power. He could not.

Many people in the Ramana Ashram believed that Ramana could teleport, because after everyone left the hall, some might come back and see that he had disappeared, when he had still been there only seconds before.

Ganeshan, Ramana’s nephew and Editor of the Mountain Path, told me that many believed that, but did not know that there was a hidden trap door near the couch where he lay, through which he exited and went to his room.

So strong is the need in many to idealize and worship someone who can “save” them from suffering and even from death, that they do not see the guru clearly. So frightened are many that they need a savior to take away their human mortality and vulnerability.

Thus you find all the comments that Ed Muzika is all-too-human versus legends like Ramana or Robert, because they have to believe in a divine or demigod savior.

Even exceptionally brilliant people needed to worship gurus, such as Ken Wilber and his fixation on Da Free John, and oh so many on Osho or Ramana.

Guru worship starts from such an idealization viewpoint. One thinks of the guru as savior and God incarnate because one projects that salvation need into a guru or series of gurus.

Then you gradually get to know what the teacher is really like, and with that a progressive disillusionment of that need to idealize and project. If while Seeing the guru ever more clearly as both human and something else, by being with him or her, having projections and idealizations broken, and if then you still can accept and love your teacher, you will find you also see yourself ever more clearly, and accept yourself as he or she accepts you, and gradually you will love yourself as much or more than you ever loved the guru.

Truly, he or she is your mirror of how you see yourself, as well as of your Invisible.

Then one day your Self, drawn by your love and acceptance of both yourself and your teacher, will reveal itself totally to you. Not in the small bits and pieces you have grown used to by practicing self-inquiry, or self-abidance, or guru-bhakti, but in a full, complete revelation of tremendous power and magnitude.

This is not to say there is just one awakening, this is just one of many awakenings that await the diligent student of him or herself.

Even Robert had a final awakening just months before he died. I was not there with him in Sedona, but I was told this by Mary Skene, who moved to Sedona from LA, to be with him. The great Zen master Joshu, said he had 17 great awakenings and thousands of small ones. So you can never count your journey in life as completed no matter how finished you feel.

A true guru is an ordinary human being but in a most extraordinary way, and so are you if only you could stop to really investigate and to see yourself without judgment, condemnation, or excessive narcissism.

I see so many gurus in the current marketplace who appear so arrogant, self-centered and intellectual, and I can see why prospective students are wary of accepting any, and thus continue to worship some dead guru, such as Ramana, Nisargadatta, or Christ, but are then stuck in relationships where the idealisms and projections never collapse, except as life knocks that need

out of them, rather than have a real relationship with a real person, where the deconstructions of your fantasies occur much more rapidly because of that relationship.

The same process holds true between human lovers. There is always a progressive disillusionment, narcissistic injuries, etc., and most such highly charged relationships break up before there is any real transformation. Then the search begins for a new lover, one who is not so imperfect as the last. But the process is the same as with the guru.

Eventually you see the teacher for who he or she really is, and by that time, you see yourself for who you really are, a process of becoming both progressively more human, and less human at the same time.

26 May 2012

Most of us begin our spiritual search early in life. Yet even if we started when we were 10 or 11, we were already well-indoctrinated by parents, culture and school into conventionality. We rapidly learned conventional speech and ways of questioning. We knew what kind of words and ideas were acceptable, and which were not. We learned political correctness. We knew what concepts, ideas and thought patterns, as well as behaviors were accepted by our parents, peers, and school, as well as what kinds of friends we should have.

By the time or 18, we are fully indoctrinated with a set of values concerning family, children, career, education, politics, consumer behaviors, and some variant of the "American dream," which we attempt to live out.

A few of us, even at an early age, see through these images, concepts and accepted behaviors, and see them as utterly arbitrary and "unreal." We become rebellious. We question religion, the politics our parents accepted, our political system, our capitalist economy, our ideas of God, Christ, and spiritual teacher in the form of the pastor, and begin exploring alternatives using our mind, because we are taught that the mind is the way to know truth and oneself.

When Plato talked about knowing one's self, it was through reason and rationality, questioning accepted beliefs through use of thinking and the mind. His was not knowing oneself as Ramana or Robert Adams talked about, as a direct experience of foundational states of consciousness.

Thus the first spiritual breakout for most of us is almost entirely of the mind. We explore Vedanta, Buddhism, mystical Christianity, Taoism, Sufism, depth psychology, psychoanalysis, bioenergetics, hatha yoga, and vegetarianism, in a vain attempt to cut an original path for our own truth.

But if we are smart enough, and self-aware enough, after a while we recognize we're still following our mind which is seeking freedom from the known by opening doors to new conceptual schemes, new behaviors, new religions, new spiritual teachers, and new politics, and we find we are not gaining freedom, but just changing our jail cells' furniture. We recognize that the mind is not the tool by which we can find freedom. The mind can only find novelty and excitement, which gives an appearance of "new," but there's no real living-transformation by adopting new sets of concepts. Indeed, there has only been a move to different rooms in the same conceptual prison, or even just changing the furniture.

Many people do this into their 50s and 60s before they recognize that the mind is not the way to freedom, that the mind only engages in concepts, and there are billions, and billions, and billions

of concepts bandied about by philosophers, scientists, engineers, politicians, school teachers and spiritual teachers since time immemorial, and none of these conceptual structures yield freedom.

Eventually we run into spiritual teachers or teachings that say the mind is not the way, that "the way" lies in dropping the mind, or transcend mind, living in emptiness, or living in and from the heart.

Yet these are really two very different ways. One implies a search for ultimate truth lying outside of concepts, which involves an exploration of "beingness" with its containers of various types of Void and "states." The other implies a path of love, loving one another, a guru, a spouse, lover, and ultimately loving one's own Self. Each path has its own separate pitfalls and difficulties, as well as milestones and potential progressions.

The search for truth, ultimate truth, within the various types of voids, and states of knowing and unknowing, can become very dry and easily stalled due to lack of motivation, and a drying out of the will to persevere. The other path, of love, can and will activate all kinds of emotional states which can be both enthralling, but also frightening and destructive, leading to all kinds of distracting stoppages.

The path of the void, or of seeking truth, generally leads one away from the world, while the path of love maintains that involvement in the world, so much so, that direct observation or realization of the Self may be delayed.

We also have to understand that the ties of the mind are very deep and subtle. We may free ourselves from fundamentalist Christianity, or fundamentalist Buddhism, or Muhammadanism, but we may not free ourselves from family values, where some variant of the American dream, including even the becoming an academic, or professional such as a doctor, psychiatrist, psychotherapist, engineer, professor, or a professional questioner such as a scientist.

We deep down recognize that escape from the conventional often means ostracism and rejection by society and crowds of people, leading to a life living at the fringes of society. It is extremely hard to escape from family values and conventionality of behaviors and then to lead a life of luxury or ease. This deters many from really opting for an "authentic" lifestyle of living out of oneself as opposed to conventions.

Those whose behaviors fall outside of the norm are often shunned, because people find them embarrassing or challenging because they are caught still in conventionality

Can you imagine inviting Nisargadatta to dinner with your conventional friends? How many would find his behaviors embarrassing, and thus reflecting poorly on you within your group of friends or family? Conventionality and properness, as well as propriety become stumbling blocks to freedom.

So, I have constantly taught people how to obtain freedom, either by going within and abiding in the I sense, or to question all of their assumptions concerning conventionality, conventional behaviors, conventional aspirations, the American dream, ideas of marriage, sex, family, material success, as well as all the ideas we have about gurus and spirituality.

Living from the heart, or living without the mind, requires dropping all conventionality, all concepts, and just being open to whatever is presenting itself to you in the moment. Any concept or idea will prevent you from seeing who you are as well as who is the "other."

(Note: Beware even of this, because this too is a concept, but one meant as a "pointer," to bring freedom.)

As Robert said, "your mind is not your friend." Yet most people accept spirituality as a progressive exploration of spiritual concepts, as opposed to dropping the mind and seeing oneself directly without the intervention of thinking, the mind or concepts.

I think it is relatively easy to drop the mind when it comes to our spiritual search. That is, through meditation and repetitive hearing that the mind is not the way, that through the mind one cannot find freedom, one gradually really begins to practice meditation and attains an empty mind rather quickly.

However, my experience is that most people encapsulate this empty mind to a small part of their lives, and no-mind, becoming nothing, does not extend outwards to family or their everyday life, because it would cause problems. Becoming unconventional is risky. Even Robert held back some of his teachings about Consciousness, saying, "If I told them the entire truth, I would be stoned."

It is if for some, their spiritual life is totally separated and disjointed from their everyday life. We may be very spiritual in our meditation and getting rid of spiritual concepts like karma, reincarnation, guru, the void, emptiness, the self, and yet very prosaic and conventional when it comes to pursuing our everyday life with our three children, worn-out marriage, and unexciting career as a doctor, lawyer, Indian chief, executive, editor, or teacher. There, we swallow our tongue so to speak, and accept this as the bed we made for ourselves, and continue to plug away, while finding more freedom through meditation and freedom from spiritual concepts, but carefully avoiding letting this freedom from spoiling our conventional life style.

When it comes to questions of breakup or divorce, quitting our jobs and starting a new career, dropping out of college, and just leaping into an unknown future, we find this is an entirely different and much larger ball of wax.

The escape from the trap of spiritual teachings is entirely less traumatic than escaping from a

dead marriage, a dead-end career that we have spent 20 years in, or even changing our politics from conservative to liberal, and actually making a commitment to getting involved there, or in animal rescue, or some other new endeavor entirely, because this involves actually walking the talk, as opposed to merely meditating and thinking about the talk. Actions speak much larger than words, concepts, or meditative peace.

I think all good teachers try to think of ways to get their students to break out of their conventionality as well as to experience one's own sense of self and to love oneself. Robert would "cook" us by creating real-life situations where our feelings would be hurt, or concepts about living would be challenged. Many people left him and the sangha rather than face these feelings. Few stayed to participate in their own deconstruction.

Other teachers, such as Siddharameshwar, focused only on meditation on the I-thought, or I-feeling, promoting a progressive penetration through the concepts of the mind, as well as other levels of mind, such that they found the void, or they found the Self.

But what then? Unless that discovery was applied to the student's everyday life, they were still a very conventional person, leading a very conventional life, and therefore a very unfree life.

Unlike most spiritual teachers, I think it is just as important to escape from the conceptual conventionality of everyday life, family, career, politics, etc., and to go beyond them entirely, than it is to escape from the "spiritual" beliefs that we are human beings based in bodies and minds, as opposed to being something entirely beyond. As long as one has the conventional belief of being a human, in a body, in a career, one cannot possibly do the full escape into the unknown and into the Self.

Those teachers living outside of conventionality are often referred to as "avadhuts." One very famous and recent avadhut was Rajneesh. In a sense, Nisargadatta was also an avadhut who challenged all of the students to shed all of their concepts, but who himself continued to lead a conventional life.

Personally, I feel that sarcasm, humor, especially dark humor or sarcastic humor, direct criticism, as well as courses and expositions that emphasize critical thinking, can be as helpful as long periods of dry meditation in freeing oneself from the conventional, whether of conventional religion, a conventional life, the American dream, political persuasions, or Facebook political correctness.

I think comedians like Lewis Black, Bill Maher, George Carlin, Jon Stewart, and many others, provide a bit of effective antidote to those immersed in the American dream, conventional religion, and conventional careers.

These men help deconstruct the conventionality we are immersed in, and help us breakout from imprisoning molds. Lewis Black states that his mother has a black belt in sarcasm, and his routines drip with such sarcasm, which can be utterly unfettering.

This is why I teach as I do, with heavy sarcasm and profanity. I desperately want people to break out of conventional mindsets and behaviors which they do not even see let alone recognize as a trap, a hindrance to freedom. This kind of freedom is far more important for the future of mankind, than for the isolated individual to gain complete release from the fetters of mind and flesh in a great Satori. When such one gains freedom and great enlightenment, he or she becomes freed, but then what? What about the rest of mankind? Are they not struggling under conventionality imposed by the Catholic Church, by born-again Christianity, by Christian morality, by Buddhist morality, by sharia law, by Jewish folklore in the form of the Old Testament, and all kinds of "political correctness?"

Is not a large portion of the population United States gripped by a very conservative mentality, supposedly Christian, but heavily subscribing to getting government out of welfare, child support, education, and healthcare, and turning all of these responsibilities over to the family or to "private enterprise," and companies with a profit motive? How do we help these people?

How do we help people who kill others, such as soldiers long indoctrinated by training and their governments into accepting killing for the sake of God and country, escape this mindset? How do we help butchers and slaughterhouse workers, as well as consumers to understand that killing sentient beings for meat, for other byproducts of their dead bodies, is repugnant and an offense to the self?

Personally, I think all these tools of humor, sarcasm, spiritual "cooking," as well as meditation and self inquiry, need to be applied to help as many people as possible escape from the traps of their minds, escape from peer pressure, escape from the American dream into a life of living from the heart, living from love and in love, and thereby finding freedom and happiness.

For this end I can see an integration of many tools of freedom in a sort of New University of Unlearning, where a whole community seeks freedom on every level, and in that freedom, they end up living from the heart and in love, and living daily in the ecstasy, relief, and silence that results from abandoning the mind and finding the heart.

28 May 2012

I have received some negative feedback regarding my previous two posts where I eschew interest in one's everyday life. Some people want to eat their cake and have it too. In other words, they want to hang on to their pride in their accomplishments, their family, their children, their job, and especially on their thinking search for spiritual knowledge, as opposed to just looking into one's own awareness and searching for the I-sense. Some people just refuse to accept no mind, becoming dumb as a rock, becoming good for nothing as a way of life. There is too much pride in them for everything about them in this worldly life.

Some people feel that the purpose of spirituality is to enhance and make better their everyday worldly life, much like many Christian Street preachers who say that it is God's will that you be happy, healthy, wealthy and wise. There are some spiritualities which are entirely directed to making your everyday life more productive and happy, like various forms of Japanese chanting Buddhism, such as the Soka Gakkai, where one chants for happiness or for things, as well as the Sedona release technique, where you learn to let go of things in order to get things.

Much of her Christianity is dedicated to securing the good life through prayer and tithing, sort of asking for a divine quid pro quo.

In any event, no matter what types of spirituality the average person practices or accepts, very few want their practices to interfere with their everyday family life and career. They want spirituality to enhance their everyday life and happiness and career goals. They want to let go of nothing. That is, they want to have their cake and eat it too without being bothered much by a need to walk the talk of surrender or letting go, and going within.

Therefore I want to read part of a talk by Siddharameshwar called "Give up the Addiction to Mundane Worldly Life," dated August 12, 1934:

The worst habit is that of mundane worldly life. It is called the "greatest addiction." By force of this addiction to worldly life, Paraatman is made to believe that He is an individual, and is compelled to live the worldly life as a prison. All bad habits can be dropped, but the addiction to mundane life is the most difficult to drop. The mundane worldly life is called the blind dark life. The greatest enticement of Illusion, Maya, is this mundane life. However great maybe one sorrow, this addiction cannot be dropped. One is greatly lucky if this addiction is dropped. There was only one person who condemns the worldly life, and that is the saint. Nobody else does that. One does not even think of leaving this worldly life, even if one suffers endless difficulties.

People try to strengthen their ties with others by speaking to them respectively and congratulating each other over small things. People compete with each other for earning more honors and status. In this way, they feel they are happy in life. They act as if this is a respectable bad habit.

The "God of Death" is happy to give you many kinds of bodies and various troubles. Know that the body is your enemy. Very few are those who have truly understood. Only those who are lucky enough to receive the blessings of the Guru, who is the Self, can escape from the illusion by right efforts. All others are bound to the treadmill of life in various incarnations, and they make houses of bodies of various shapes and duration.

Those who consider themselves as being very scholarly only raise many various doubts and lead quite a wrong way of spiritual life. They only end up unhappy and make others unhappy as well. The man who is extraordinarily clever and learned is truly of no use. He puts himself and others at a great loss. He suffers because of his own pride in knowledge and worldly attainments.

The things of this world that are cherished by people always breed fear. When some action is done after listening to the opinions of worldly people, it increases many kinds of fear. We get completely exhausted and trying to maintain those things that appear in the illusion, as those things are ultimately perishable.

In short, people are like donkeys. They never listen because they are heavily conditioned from birth. However, those of you who do listen to the guru will attain self-realization.

The same holds true for those possessed by various ideas, such as spiritual purity, either of themselves or the guru. Siddharameshwar says on page 156 Of the Master of Self-Realization, the following:

Once there was a disciple who although he had received instructions from his guru, had not given up his former attitude. He had a peculiar sense of cleanliness and purity. His concept was that in order to avoid the touch of the dirty earth, he climbed up a tree. He lived in a tree, drank only rainwater and continued to lead that the earth was in pure.

When his guru came to know of this, he went to see him. The disciple had become very famous. People have built quite a large round platform around tree that he lived in, and had made a lot of decorations. The disciple did not like to come down, because to him the earth was impure. When the Guru came to him, he said, "You come down." The disciples said, "I will not touch the earth." The Guru asked him, "Where was he sitting," and the disciple replied, "On a tree."

With this the guru said, "The tree is part of the earth and you remain in the tree. The tree in the earth are not separate. You have separated them by your mind, but in reality, the tree cannot be separated from the earth. The tree is the offspring of the earth and therefore cannot be separated from it. You are smothered by your imaginary distinctions of pure and impure, and in this way

you would have become very impure. I gave you mantra so you would become pure, in unity with the whole world, but you, by your imagination are holding onto ideas of separateness, purity and impurity. Because of that you have become impure. You are now unfit for the realization that there is nothing other than Brahman. This is why you have no self-knowledge and you will not be able to realize everything is only one absolute Brahman.”

As a disciple listen to this, he understood his following and with fear, he climbed down. The guru said, in order to wipe out your ego you have to live in a pig pen for six months.

Is this not the way of many religions, from the Christian devote flailing themselves to obtain purity, to the ten commandments, to the 500 vows of living made by a fully ordained Buddhistmonk, and by the million “shoulds of society” and religion we all live by? Siddharameshwar clearly states all the spiritual and religious ideas separate us from the totality of life and the world by setting us apart, making some actions and ideals pure, good, or impure.

I do it myself. I tell people not to eat meat. But this is my own way. It made me feel better about myself once I knew animals were not dying to keep me alive, and in a sense, I set myself apart by taking this stance. But it is a separation I can live with because I accept the goal of nonviolence.

30 May 2012

In 1997 or 1998, I went to Korea, sponsored by a Korean Zen Master in Los Angeles, named Do Ahn Kim, abbot at Kwan Um Sah. I was introduced to the inner workings and power structure of [Chogye Zen Buddhism](#) in Seoul. I was "shopped" around by Do Ahn's brother, meeting all the high monks of the 6,000 temple order.

I did not have to do a thing. I was treated as royalty, and the propaganda branch of the order at the link above, eventually made me the first American World Teacher of Chogye Buddhism, which authorized me to start a new branch of [Chogye Buddhism in the U.S.](#) However, later I found out that this was really a titular post, and that all teachings were to be controlled in the background by Do Ahn Kim. I did not know this when I was in Korea though.

In any event, being treated like a king, never having to carry money, I.D., or anything. Being treated like a dignitary had a profound effect on my psyche. I felt happy all the time. Wherever I went I was honored and cared for. I felt a profound relaxation as all details of everyday life were taken care of by others, and I just was guided from one venue to another to speak to groups or meet Chogye elders, including the ruling inner circle who wanted to emulate Soen Sahn Soen Sa's success in the U.S., but with someone more under their control.

I was totally at peace, smiling, happy, even when accidents occurred such as getting lost in downtown Seoul.

Here is the issue: When your life is easy, and people all around you idealize you, take care of you and your needs, and you have no real need to plan or take care of anything, except to show up when others take you somewhere, it is really, really easy to be happy, loving and benevolent.

And, when you are a major guru such as Muktananda, Osho, Ramana or many others, where you have a large inner group of "guru-taker-care-ofs" as an entourage, it is really easy to be continuously happy and benevolent.

And, surrounded by that culture which even creates an image for you of who you are, such as disciples did around Muktananda and Ramana, let alone Krishnamurti and the Dalai Lama, an image of affable and transcendent indifference is easy to maintain, and the myth of the transcendent guru is born.

Students coming from the outside are presented with a guru persona created by the guru's

handlers and by their largely staged and handled public appearances, backed by their professional PR staffs and writers of books, bios, lessons, and organizational teachers.

At this point, few can really see who or what the teacher or guru is really like because you are immersed in a culture of adulation and prepared images, which are sort of like universal archetypes of the guru that even American's have, of a person who has "transcended" life, is all knowing, omniscient, an embodiment of all that is good, truth, and light. Anyone who challenges this image in any way should beware.

The real guru only comes out in dealings with his entourage on a day by day basis, dealings the average person never knows about. The guru image and persona is the only entity the vast majority of followers ever see.

If the guru begins to get unstable as did Osho, or scandals of one sort or another begin to arise, the real guru is taken underground and sort of disappears from public view, or moves out of the country as did Da Free John to Figi, or Osho disappearing by going silent.

The guru archetype is alive and well in most of us, the need for a father or god-like figure who is omniscient, who will love and protect us, and gradually reveal to us, what it is like to be beyond human, all-knowing and divine.

But you see, this is all projection and image, carefully managed by handlers, whether of Ramana, Muktananda, or as I did with Robert Adams.

It is the guru myth so carefully created and maintained, which is really the universal myth built into all of us of the "God-Man" or superman, that is precisely that which prevents us from becoming real, becoming enlightened and bereft of any illusion of superman-hood.

The true spiritual path consists of losing all of these images and just becoming more and more "unspecial," "unrealized," "unthinking," and "undreaming," and just becoming YOU as the sense of I-Am.

All the images are what make up the false self, the idealized and also the hated and buried images of ourselves carefully pushed out of consciousness. Getting rid of these images, ideals, projections, and the attached emotions and thought processes, and really becoming you IS THE PROCESS OF BECOMING SELF-REALIZED. One becomes more and more ordinary, dissolving all the "wrinkles" in everyday consciousness, such that the core experience of "I-ness" is recognized and revealed, and well as the secondary recognition that that I is both identical to what I "really" am, but at the same time, "I" am altogether entirely beyond it.

So, realize it is really, really easy for a guru (or anyone) to be, or at least appear happy when surrounded by handlers that make his or her day wrinkle-free, and if unhappiness or anger hit, they pass briefly and never escape from his inner circle. Thus the image of the perfect god-man is created and maintained, and separately maintained by the guru culture.

Given that this is universally the case, one can easily see that the only people in the guru environment who can take advantage of the presence of the teacher, are for those close enough to see what he or she is really like. This happens only to handlers around supremely popular gurus like Osho or Muktananda, (who themselves are often corrupted by the narcissism that their own culture has created by being part of an inner circle), or by being around a teacher who is relatively unknown, such as Robert during his life.

Even then, most who attended Satsang never saw Robert for who he was, they saw their projections, positive or negative, and when the positive projections were broken, they had two choices: cut and run, as did most, or stay because you loved or respected Robert, as did I. Guess which of these two classes of people makes any "progress" in "lightening" themselves of false images, emotional baggage, and endarkening beliefs?