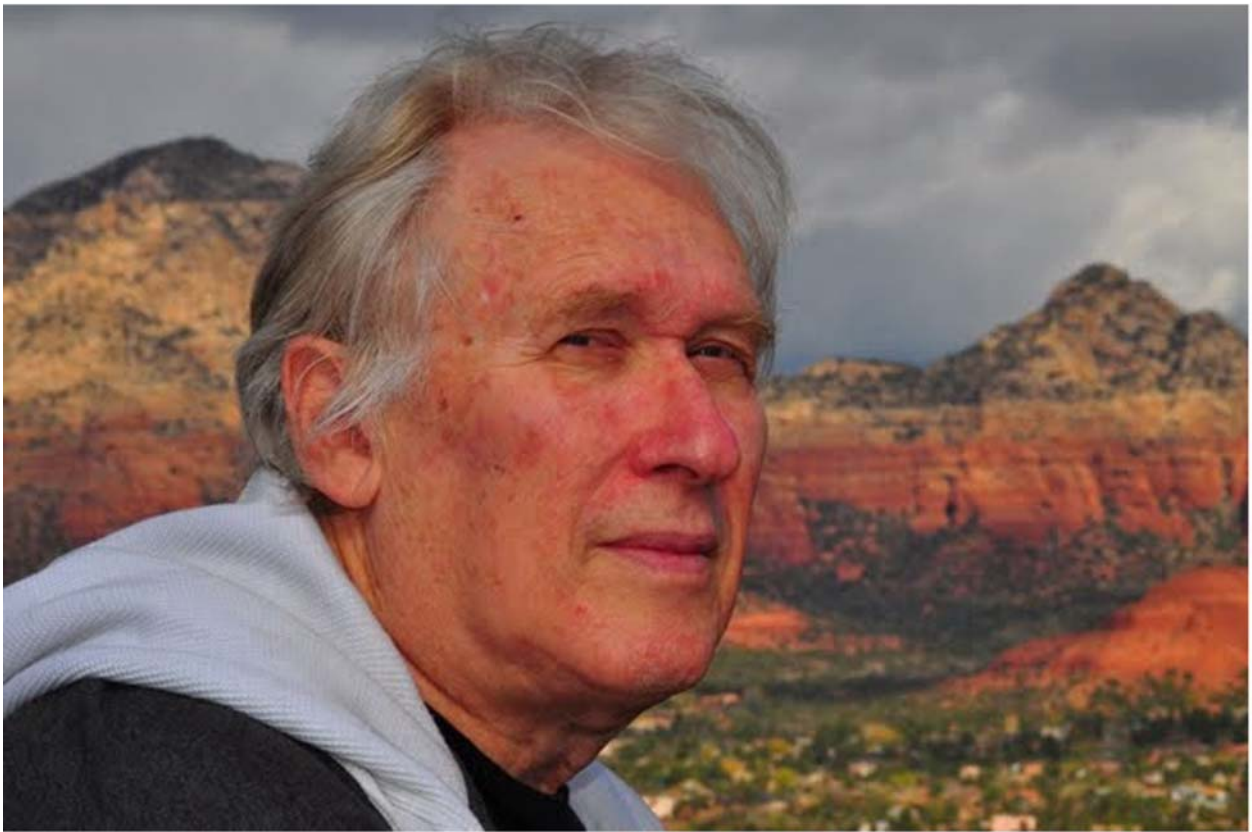


Stop Thinking!



Teachings from Ed Muzika

Collected from his blog - <http://itisnotreal.blogspot.com/>

Short Introduction

Because the form of a blog is even more transient than that of a book, it seems a good idea to print some of the striking posts made by Ed Muzika on the correct practice of Self inquiry.

This project does not focus on the extraordinary interactions between teacher Ed Muzika and student Rajiv Kapur which is already collected as *Autobiography of a Jnani*. Nor does it exhaustively capture all of Ed's answers to student questions as does *Complete Blog Dialogues in Book Form, 2005-2010*.

The aim is to collect a few powerful pronouncements made recently in a gesture to preserve the teachings of Edward Muzika. He is a *jnani* in the spiritual lineage of Self-realized teachers Nisargadatta Maharaj, Jean Dunn, Ramana Maharshi and Robert Adams.

Thank you, Ed.

Matthew Brown
Toronto, 2010

Ed Muzika Decides to Teach in Earnest

04 November 2009

In 1968 I had completed Master's work in Public Management at Western Reserve University in Cleveland. I had gone to Detroit and studied Economics as a Ph.D. candidate at Wayne State University. I had also been working as a demographer for the County Cleveland was located in, and at TALUS, Detroit's seven year land use study.

I was sick of it. The County didn't care about accuracy, only lying statistics that supported their claim for federal money. I saw economic theory was mostly empty words and unverifiable concepts—useless. (I am still a Keynesian however.)

I had gotten my BA in philosophy and had always been interested in only two topics: ontology and epistemology. That is, what exists and how do we know? Hume and Kant were my Western philosophy mentors, while Ramana and Phillip Kapleau were my Eastern philosophy mentors. I had read Kapleau's Three Pillars of Zen a half dozen times and Ramana's "Who Am I" many more times than that.

One day, sitting by a window in an office in Cleveland after having performed 88 population projections and heard too many lies, I saw several sailboats floating by on Lake Erie. At that moment, I knew I could not put up with the farce any longer. My life was a waste. The world seemed totally out of whack and most people were in lock step with this out of whackness. I just didn't fit. So, I decided to chuck everything and leave on a spiritual odyssey.

I took three books: Three Pillars of Zen, the Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi and The Practice of Zen by Garma C.C. Chang. All three books focused on how to practice self-inquiry style meditation.

Subsequently I got a job on several of the Great Lakes oar boats carrying taconite between Minnesota and Cleveland. Later, I took off and flew to visit my brother in Tucson and spent several months living deep in the Sonoran Desert, all the while trying to figure out how best to practice self-inquiry.

I found this sort of searching useless. There were too many distractions, especially for an untrained, unstable mind. So I moved to Rochester New York to study with Phillip Kapleau, and later, to Mt. Baldy in Southern California to study under Zen master Sasaki Roshi.

It wasn't until I made the commitment to study under a master that my meditation became focused and revealed results.

I talk about this in more detail on the website <http://itisnotreal.com>.

Anyway, I practiced self-inquiry off and on for 25 years before I had my first awakening as to a true understanding of 'I'. I describe this as my shower experience on that website.

It took me 25 years to fully comprehend what the I-thought meant. (I am more than a bit dimwitted.) What kept me so long is that I spent so much time immersed in the “more real I,” the background of consciousness that Langford talks about that I ignored the I-thought, seeing that the thought itself had no substance, but still searching for a referent for that I-thought. I.e., I thought some day while immersed in that vast internal emptiness of self-illuminated awareness, I would find the true subject.

It was through all those early years of intense practice, sometimes sitting in meditation 10-12 hours a day for years that I experienced all the Kundalini nonsense and all the variable states of consciousness which entirely inhibited true understanding.

Finally, a few weeks after Robert Adams left Los Angeles and moved to Sedona I had my first awakening experience, which is to clearly see that the ‘I thought’ had no referent. It did not point to any internal entity. I also saw that the I-thought had no substance. It sometimes could be seen to appear like the visual floaters some nearsighted people have, like little transparent clouds floating into and out of emptiness. At other times, the ‘I thought’ appeared to be more like a focusing mechanism that aimed attention around in various ways. I had only focused on the emptiness, the awareness that contained everything, and was self-illuminated, the light of consciousness.

Yet, I saw that that this emptiness also was not me, it was still an object. I was witnessing it. The ‘I thought’ was even less me, because it sprang out of the emptiness-void, and disappeared back into it.

Then one day in 1997, I finally saw, apprehended, understood, was blown away by the sudden understanding that emptiness was all that there was; emptiness was all that existed. Eternal, vast space, self-illuminated, permeating everything and I was that. I saw that the I-thought had no referent. There was no I entity that the ‘I thought’ pointed to. There was no Ed Muzika. There was only space, disparate thoughts loosely connected with each other, and the ‘I-thought’ was simply another percept floating around in inner emptiness. I was not there, only emptiness existed.

Then I saw one other thing deeply: the ‘I-thought’ was the subjective, while all other thoughts were “objective.” That is, I had taken the I thought as being me, and all other thoughts and concepts, such as of world, chair, map, food, other people, were “objective.”

When I saw the ‘I-thought’ was unreal, empty, I saw ALL OTHER WORDS AND CONCEPTS WERE ALSO EMPTY. Immediately the world ceased to exist. By that, I mean I saw nothing in the world I saw was real, it was created by thought which made an object out of what is, within a matrix of a vast, self-illuminated emptiness which was, what is.

This is exactly Ramana's initial experience: the "I-thought" didn't exist as an entity. It was empty, and with that insight, the whole world is found not to exist as we have always assumed it existed, as real, external objects.

All that there is, is the vast emptiness of consciousness, populated by forms which have no inherent existence except as concepts.

However, I was later to see that this was only a partial awakening.

Later I discovered that this understanding acquired in waking consciousness, was only true about the waking consciousness. Ramana had not yet gone far enough in his initial awakening, just as I had not.

One has to see that the waking consciousness itself—the entirety of existence—is unreal, and that waking consciousness, as sleep and dream are added onto the deepest sense of me as witness.

You, me, the Real you and me, lie entirely beyond consciousness of the world. You might say our true nature lies in an entirely different dimension from all observables, including the world, our minds, our dreams and various states of consciousness, and even the emptiness and the void; all are observables and we are beyond them. We are beyond everything, unborn and unwitting witnesses of all that is, which is merely fantasy stuff, making up consciousness. Not only do you need to give up identification with the world and the mind, but also emptiness, the self-illuminated void consciousness.

When I announced this understanding to Robert he said I got it. After being with him for seven years I had gotten it. Robert had told me the real secret, which is that even consciousness does not exist in the sense it had no reality apart from the other-dimensional subject, the witness of all about which nothing can be known or said. You can only BE the witness, who everyone is already, but do not recognize it because they identify with the body or mind.

This is so momentous of an understanding that it is hard to convey no matter how hard I try, because I am talking in concepts, or pointers, and no one ever knows another's subjectivity and conceptual matrix.

Each of us is a pseudo-person until we see through that I-thought matrix. That matrix can be relatively similar to the matrix of others in so far as each of us has common upbringings. But if education and life experiences are too different, truly understanding another's world and knowing how to make a unique impression on that person's subjectivity is virtually impossible.

My body is now just two years younger than Robert's when he died. I feel a weight of time pressing. My health is not good at times. I want as much as possible to make Robert and the understanding he gave me more available to the world.

I have noticed that the quality of questions and seekers now contacting me is far more spiritually "mature" than two years ago. There are more and more people who are "getting it" or on the verge of getting it, and by getting it, I mean going all the way beyond consciousness.

Therefore, I have decided to start teaching in earnest, which may or may not mean Satsang in Los Angeles, but definitely does mean I am going to attempt to clear up all doubts of anyone who has them by making a detailed exposition and explanation of at least (initially) three texts that I consider the key to getting it. The three are: The Path of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Part 1 by Sadhu Om and Michael James; Prior to Consciousness, edited by Jean Dunn, and the Nisargadatta Gita by Pradeep Apte.

These expositions will come in the form of lessons covering a chapter or so of each text at a time. Maybe there will be a video post on Facebook or something like it.

Anyway, I'll start in a couple of weeks. My mother is ill in Phoenix and I'll be there for a while and will start when I return.

Posted by Ed Muzika [0 comments](#) at [11:55 AM](#)

03 November 2009

An email sent to me:

Hello,

I am that which knows the coming and going of the state of being. There was this complete fullness so to speak, complete within itself and then spontaneously the rising of the sense of being was known. This occurred during waking up from sleep. I am not able to understand this state.

I know what I am...I am non-conceptual...but now this wants to be captured in words...painful and confusing....words need to conceptualize me...I turn to you for some assistance.

I always recognized my sense of being..aware and unadorned by concepts as the space that I was...but when I now see that that too is rising and setting in what I really am...I am lost for words to understand.....

On what is this knowing resting then?

My response:

Every answer would miss the point as all knowledge is about existence, objects, phenomena.

What you are is before existence.

You are uncreated, unborn.

His next email:

I am that which knows the coming and going of the state of being.

My Response: Yes, this is perfect understanding.

There was this complete fullness so to speak, complete within itself and then spontaneously the rising of the sense of being was known. This occurred during waking up from sleep.

Yes, this is how it is usually first seen.

I am not able to understand this state. I know what I am...I am non-conceptual...but now this wants to be captured in words...painful and confusing....words need to conceptualize me...I turn to you for some assistance.

All conceptualizations are only philosophy, empty, transitory, illusion. You must learn how to accept knowing nothing.

I always recognized my sense of being..aware and unadorned by concepts as the space that I was...but when I now see that that too is rising and setting in what I really am...I am lost for words to understand.....

Don't you see? What you are is entirely beyond the mind and cannot be captured in words

or concepts. There is no need to understand; just be.

New email:

The self or whatever it is..is so un-contrived...spontaneous and self sufficient...that is seen in ordinary moments of just simple being.

No words needed to be...simply are.

When these various states or experiences occur, there is an attempt to understand it..when the experience itself is not requiring that.. :) it also just is... and you have so correctly stated..all explanations are only about the state of existence...and therefore the correct answer in all respects is that ..you are unborn...that shuts any more concept building.

Ed..the clarity that these words you have written, also cannot be captured in words...i can only say..thank you!

NEW TEACHING SERIES:
Chapter I The Need For Effort

I had my first awakening experience while taking a shower. As I had done before thousands of times, while feeling the water hitting my back, I looked inside into my inner sense of space, and asked, "Who feels the water hitting my back?" Over the years of looking inward, looking for the I, that inner subjective space had become empty space, self-illuminated, and all inner objects and forms, including images and thoughts, were clearly seen as insubstantial, empty of separate beingness, permeated by a three dimensional void that permeated and contained everything.

However, this particular day something happened. I saw looking inwards, only the void and void-permeated images that had no existential substance, and attained Kensho, the first awakening.

The awakening was both an experience that form and emptiness were one and interpenetrated each other, but also that no object inside existed with any existential substance. It was all just mind.

I saw too at that time that there was no I. There was no entity inside that could be called Ed Muzika. There was no Ed Muzika and there was no I. There also was no I-thought, because the concept of I-thought required there to be a substantial and sustained entity called and I thought. Instead, all that there was was a shadow like object that floated in and out of emptiness. There was no I-thought as a stable, self-sustained entity. Indeed, no thought was a stable, mental entity. They were all brief ghost-like entities that came from a darkness at the edge of the phenomenal void, had a few seconds of existence, then passed away again into that darkness where consciousness could not follow.

The discovery that there was no Ed Muzika as an objective entity, and that there was not even an I-thought brought about a calamitous personal experience and existential collapse that I wrote about [here](#). This experience lasted a few hours and deepened second by second and minute by minute until I had seen entirely through the empty nature of existence, the world and even consciousness. There were other awakenings to come, but they all just opened and broadened the reach of this first awakening.

What I saw is that the I-thought created a separation between I and the rest of the world. I appeared to be something inside the body, everything else was outside. When I saw the I did not exist, it was only a concept, it became clear that nothing else existed either because all other thoughts depended on the I-thought for its reality. The I-thought was the lynch pin. Without this central organizing thought, all the other thoughts and concepts came crashing down as being just as unreal as the I thought. That is, there were no objects associated with the non-I-thoughts, just as there was no object associated with the I-thought. Indeed, all objects were just conceptual, they did not exist in any reality other than my imagination. They existed as imaginary objects in my inner imaginal space that "I" superimposed on sense impressions. The world was wholly a

mental creation, but I didn't create it any longer since I did not exist any longer. Since there was no longer an I to sustain it, the entire world came crashing down. It was an illusion. The reality was only the Void, while imaginary entities came from a darkness behind the Void, into the Void, and passed away again, either because they were ignored or the mind went to sleep.[1]

I want to be clear. I had practiced "looking inside" in various ways for 27 years before this experience in 1995. I had started by working on the koan mentioned by Zen master Bassui in the 12th Century. At times I looked inside in meditation 10 hours a day in formal meditation. For years I did not work, or I worked part-time. Over those years I was visited by thousands of Kundalini experiences, energies, visions, and an ever growing awareness of the Void nature of all entities, inner and outer.

At Mt. Baldy I would sit in meditation and go through a process wherein my mind would grow solid as a rock, where my head felt like it became as dense as a brick until all consciousness stopped, and my mind suddenly fell downwards and broke open, suddenly revealing one consciousness, without thought, that was brilliantly happy and embraced all the universe. But ordinary mind was always to return.

What happened in 1995 was the sudden recognition that the Void Oneness mind was all that there is. Nothing else existed. With this recognition my life changed completely because I saw I was not human. I was consciousness itself, uncontained by the body and coextensive with the world. One brilliant mind.

(A later experience revealed to me that even this one brilliant mind, the oneness consciousness, even though it was all that existed, was itself not real. Existence and consciousness are the same, but there is something beyond existence and consciousness that we all are, but which can never be known, only "felt." That is, the world is One vast emptiness, but even that One is not real.)

ness that is the thread that passes unerringly through the Void and the darkness beyond the Void to your truest and deepest existence beyond consciousness, and from which position you observe consciousness.

This inner exploration is not a trivial process of a few days or hours, but can take a lifetime because the inner world is so incredibly complex and because you have to spend years looking inside to counterbalance the many years of looking and searching outside in the world, which is what the ways of the world teach you. Ultimately, there is no inner and outer, but you cannot realize this until your inner space is as clearly perceived and known as your outer space.

What I plan on doing now is wading through several books by or about Robert Adams, Ramana Maharshi and Nisargadatta Maharaj that reinforce the message that practice in the form of self-inquiry or self abidance is needed before you can truly see the I is empty, and thereby destroy your mind and the external world at the same moment.

[1] Much of the phenomenology and philosophy of this area is explained in "Autobiography of a Jnani."

The first book we'll look at the "The Path of Ramana Maharshi—Part One" by Sadhu Om and Michael James. This is the best book on self-inquiry that there is. Read the entire book. Each chapter is a gem in its own way. Michael has written a much longer and more detailed book that covers the same area and more, but this book is the perfect bite-size that the beginner and intermediate student needs, as well as for a more advanced student that has lost his or her way. The links to Michael James books and site can be found on <http://itisnotreal.com>. I will refer to this book as PR1.

PR1-97

In the waking state when we enjoy agreeable experiences through the five senses, there is quiescence of the mind for an extremely short period of time. In sleep the period of the mind's quiescence is a little longer¹⁸. In death also the mind is likewise quiescent only. All these are only quiescence of the mind (*mano-laya*) and not the destruction of the mind (*mano-nasa*). It is not enough if misery (i.e. mind) is temporarily absorbed, it must be destroyed. This is the goal of mankind. Temporary quiescence (*laya*) of the mind is temporary quiescence of misery, and permanent destruction (*nasa*) of the mind is permanent destruction of misery; that is, the mind itself is misery! Hence, let us find out what is to be done to destroy the mind.

COMMENT:

By destruction of the mind, he does not mean thoughts never arise again, but only that the empty nature of thoughts is clearly perceived, and that there are no associated objects that these ghostlike entities apparently point to. With this recognition, not only is the I seen to not exist, therefore there is no entity that can die or be killed, or suffer, but, indeed, the world itself is seen to be empty, an illusion, and thus something that cannot touch you in any way unless you believe in it. Then it would touch the imaginary you in an imaginary way.

PR1-97

What is mind? The verdict given by Sri Bhagavan is:

"The mind is only thoughts..."

'Upadesa Undhiyar,' verse 18

If we give up all thoughts and observe what is mind, we will find that there is no such thing as 'mind' at all.

"If one enquires—without inadvertence (*pramada*) – into the form of the mind, it will be found that there is no such thing as mind! This is the direct path for all!"

'Upadesa Undhiyar', verse 17

PR1-98

For destroying the mind it is enough if thoughts are destroyed. Let us therefore find out what thoughts actually are. This scrutiny is not an idle way of passing time. Is not the entire world struggling for happiness? Even this scrutiny is undertaken in view of obtaining that same happiness. Then what is the difference between the efforts of humanity in general and this effort undertaken by a spiritual aspirant? The efforts of worldly people lead only to a fleeting semblance of happiness, whereas this effort of an aspirant – Self-enquiry – paves the path to perfect, eternal and unlimited happiness. Therefore, this research is far more important and worthy than all other kinds of human endeavour! Throughout this scrutiny, one must be very vigilant and put forth one's very best efforts. Only then will the result of one's enquiry – the supreme gain of life – be obtained here and now.

PR1-98

Did we not begin with a proposal to scrutinize thoughts? For what reason? The aim is to destroy all thoughts and thereby to enjoy perfect happiness. Millions of thoughts rise in us, out of which we must search for and discover the first and root thought. When we do so, we will find that the first person thought, 'I am this body', which rises as soon as one wakes up from sleep, is the first thought. This 'I'-thought is the root of all thoughts.

"The mind is only thoughts. Of all thoughts, the thought 'I' is indeed the root-thought. Therefore, what is called mind is only the thought 'I' (i.e. the feeling 'I am the body')."

'Upadesa Undhiyar', verse 18

PR1-99

If the first person does not rise, the second and third persons will not come into existence. The first person is nothing but the thought 'I', and this alone is mind. The second and third persons will rise only after the rising of the first person, 'I'. The world is nothing but second and third persons.

"Only if that first person (the ego) in the form 'I am the body' exists, will the second and third persons also exist..."

'Ulladhu Narpadhu', verse 14

"If there is no 'I'-thought, no other thing will exist..."

'Sri Arunachala Ashtakam', verse 7

If the 'I'-thought – the root of all thoughts – is prevented from rising, all other thoughts will also be prevented. If a man wants to cut down the millions of leaves and hundreds of branches of a tree, is it not enough if he cuts down the trunk? Similarly, a man who is trying to destroy all the millions and millions of thoughts will have

succeeded in doing so if he destroys the 'I'-thought, their root. Did we not start with the objective of scrutinizing thoughts? From what we have seen above, it is now clear that it is not necessary to scrutinize each and every thought, and that a scrutiny of only the 'I'-thought, the root of all thoughts, is quite sufficient.

PR1-101

The first person thought, 'I', has this peculiar property: if (by enquiring 'Who am I?') attention is focused on it in order to discover what it is, this 'I' thought will subside.

PR1-101

"The thought 'I am this body of flesh and blood' is the one thread on which are strung the various other thoughts. Therefore if we turn inwards, 'Where is this I?', all thoughts [including the 'I'- thought] will come to an end and Self-knowledge will then spontaneously shine forth within the cave (the heart) as 'I-I' ..."

PR1-102

"... When the first person ceases to exist through one's enquiry into the truth of that first person, then the existence of the second and third persons will come to an end"

'Ulladhu Narpadhu', verse 14

Thus, the method of destroying the 'I'-thought is also the method which will destroy all other thoughts. Therefore, what is essential is to destroy the first person thought, 'I'. The only way to destroy it is to scrutinize its nature! There is no other way!!

"...How else to attain that state wherein 'I' (the ego) does not rise the state of egolessness unless we seek the source whence 'I' rises?..."

'Ulladu Narpadhu', verse 27

CHAPTER 2

The Need to go Beyond No-I

CHAPTER 2--

NOW WITH A ROBERT ADAMS SATSANG AUDIO

The Need to go Beyond No-I

I have a fundamental disagreement with the Neo-Advaita and Rinzai Zen position that awakening begins and ends with the discovery that the I-thought has no internal object of reference. That is, they hold once you look inside and see that there is no I, one immediately recognizes that all that there is, is Consciousness, and that is the Absolute, and no more practice or self-investigative effort is needed.

Firstly, many people who do look inside find all kinds of internal objects. Others have very poor introspective skills and find nothing. Others find endless, internal and imaginal objects, from thoughts, to feelings, to memories, imaginations, images to body sensations. If you are naturally introspective, or have developed introspective awareness, the internal-imaginal world is a zoo. For this person, to say they find no I is not a compelling argument, because they don't understand which of those zoo inmates they are supposed to reject as not-I or I.

On the other hand, the non-introspective person easily finds nothing because the inner world has never been open to them. Thus, following the command and interpretation, "Look within for the I," followed by the statement, "You didn't find anything, did you," makes complete sense. There are many, many people who are not aware of inner objects like the I-sense, emotions or images. But they can grasp concepts.

From there they can easily accept the Neo-Advaita guru's statement, that indeed, there is no I, and that which you see and experience now is all that there is, call it "isness" or whatever they want to call it. The guru tells them this Is-ness is the Absolute and unborn nature of reality. The guru now tells them they are enlightened. Just look inside for a moment, finding no I, and know that this is the beginning and end of spirituality."

In fact, if the person accepts this, he or she has merely accepted a new concept about awakening. There is no need to do anything. You are already perfect, no-I, blissful, complete and absolute. Now go forth to facebook and trade quotes with other neo-Advaita gurus and students. “Is-ness” for the non-introspective person is more or less the waking external world.

However, the sophisticated student for whom the inner world is blindingly complex will not buy this. He or she understands there is much more to the I-sense than merely the I-thought. For this person, seeing that there is no internal object to which the I-thought points is merely the first step in a long process of finding out who or what he or she truly is at the deepest level.

Both Ramana and Nisargadatta speak of deeper levels of I and consciousness, and of the I-sense that even goes deeper than waking or sleep consciousness itself. So does Robert who endlessly told students to dive deep within themselves. He never said look within and find nothing, and then know you are liberated.

The I-sense is quite complex and must be understood completely at all levels before there can be any talk about the absolute or the ultimate meaning of life and death.

The Neo-Advaitin’s discovery of no I object related to the I thought, in no way supports any argument that waking consciousness and the abundance of the waking consciousness is Absolute or immortal.

What is immortal is entirely beyond consciousness as we know it and this can only be understood by a progressive deepening of awareness of the internal world and more especially, the I-sense. The I-sense must be followed downwards as a thread, through all the sensations associated with the body, down through all the imaginations and images/feelings of the mind, and even further downwards into the empty darkness of not being awake to the world, the state of no awareness of anything.

Consciousness as we know it, appears and disappears. It comes and goes. It is not absolute. It is temporary and time limited. The neo-advaitins do not accept this obvious truth which is the common sense understanding of ordinary people as well as the enlightened Jnani. Yet, we are aware of the coming and going of the various forms of phenomenality, which I may call consciousness. When I awaken in the morning, it is not as if I am a newborn with no knowledge of the world. I remember that there have been numberless cyclings of the coming and going of various grades and activities of consciousness, from the dream state, to the awake state,

to all grades and varieties of consciousness including the coming and going of sleep and nothingness. Nothingness too is an experience that we can remember. If asked to describe the sleep state, most people will take a shot at a description, such as it was darkness, nothingness, peaceful, restful, with no experience of consciousness whatsoever.

Yet, each day I awaken and feel the same identity as the same and unchanged as the day before. Indeed, throughout my life, I feel the same and unchanged no matter how much my body changes, or my mood changes, or activity level or any other change.

It is this central core of knowledge of the unchanging, which witnesses and observes the coming and going of consciousness, sleep, images, thoughts, imaginations, emotions, etc., which is the ultimate subject, the witness which we must become aware of to pass beyond life and death.

The I-thought is only one small, but very significant part of the I-sense, which actually penetrates downwards through the perceptions of the gross body, through the subtle body of the imaginal/mental world, and down through the causal body of no awareness, leading to that most fundamental sense of self that transcends the world and lies prior to (waking/dream) consciousness.

This fundamental witness can never be cognized as an object, because objects are objects of investigation of the mind. The mind cannot penetrate downwards deeper than the mind-body level (subtle body). The becoming aware of that which lies deeper than the darkness of sleep, the causal body existence, can never be known as we are used to knowing an object of mind. We can only be at that deepest level, and in that being, apprehend existence beyond existence, a different sort of existence beyond the mind and body, not cognizable by mind.

This area of spiritual existence is explored more fully in [Autobiography of a Jnani](#). It is existence entirely beyond human existence. Even to call it the absolute is to give it qualities it lacks. It is entirely beyond any property, description or experience of the mind or consciousness.

I want now to turn to secondary confirmation of this understanding to be found in the teachings of Robert Adams, Ramana Maharshi and Nisargdatta.

From Michael James and Sadhu Om's Path of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Vol. I

The wrong identification 'I am the body' is itself all of these: mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), the storehouse of tendencies (*chittam*), ego (*ahankara*), wrong knowledge (*ajnana*), nescience (*sunya*), *maya*, and so on. The *prana* is a gross form of this mind, and so is the physical body! Even the mind is a body, but a subtle one; *prana* is a little grosser than mind; and the body of flesh and blood is still grosser than the *prana*; The subtle mind in its subtler form is itself the tendencies (*vasanas*) or the darkness of ignorance. Let us classify all these forms of the mind into three categories, namely the gross, subtle and causal bodies.²⁰

All the gross forms – the body, blood circulation and respiration – which are cognized by the mind through the five senses constitute the gross body; this is because all these are clearly cognized by the mind, the subtle body, which is the second in our classification. Though the sastras usually include *pranamaya kosa* in the category of subtle body, we have here included it in the category of gross body because it is clearly perceived by the mind as an object other than the mind, and since this will help us a great deal in applying our test. Moreover, since all these five sheaths are finally to be discarded as 'not I' (non-Self), no man with a little common sense will object to its being included with either of those two bodies²¹.

PR1-108

Further, in the same manner as this 'I am the body'- consciousness (*dehatma-buddhi*) clings to the gross body as 'I', it can also cling in a subtle way to many other bodies. For instance, when the gross body is inactive, is not the mind working? Dream is one such case. It is an example of our taking a subtle body. During dream, the mind – as if it had taken another gross body – functions and knows many things through that body. This dream body is simply a mental projection. It is nothing but the mind itself. So it can also be called the subtle body, But do we not exist in dreamless sleep? Therefore, since we can exist even without this dream-body, we can clearly understand that it is not 'I'. We should not think that the mind thus functions with a subtle body only in dream. Even in the waking state, do we not day-dream? We know that these subtle bodies which we thus take now and then are transient. When we wake up from dream, the dream-body is gone. In the same manner, the body assumed in day-dream also becomes false (non-existent). That is, these bodies are false forms which come on us and go. Thus we can conclude that we exist even in the absence of these bodies. Therefore, they are not 'we'.

Now, if we scrutinize further, we will find that we have another kind of body even subtler than the subtle body. Here also, to support this, each one of us has his own experience, namely dreamless sleep. At that time we have neither the gross nor subtle body. The mind having completely subsided we sink at rest in total darkness, knowing nothing. When the mind rises again from this darkness, either dream or waking results. When we wake up from deep sleep, we remember our experience thus, 'I slept happily and did not have any dream'. That is, we know that we existed even in that state of seeming darkness in which there was not even a dream. That dark state is called the causal body³⁰.

We who know that we knew that we existed there, is the real 'I'.

PR1-123

In deep sleep, the ego (*ahankara* – the mind in the form of attachments) is still alive in the very subtle form of tendencies (*vasanas*); it is this form which is that base and cause for the rising of the subtle and gross bodies, and therefore it is called the causal body. Even in death, it is in this causal body that we exist. This causal body is not destroyed by the death of the gross body. The reason for asserting that even this causal body is not 'I', is that we exist there to know even that state to be alien to us. There, our existence alone is real, and we cannot be the form (darkness or ignorance) which we assume there. Just as we rejected the gross body of the waking state as 'I am not this body', even though it appeared to be 'I', and just as for the same reason we rejected the subtle body of the dream state as 'not I', let us now also reject this causal body (darkness or ignorance) of deep sleep as 'not I', since it is only a form which comes on us and goes. Therefore, having firmly eliminated all these three bodies as 'not I, not I', what then remains, that knowledge, the consciousness (*chit*) of our existence (*sat*), alone is 'I'.

(COMMENT By Ed: This is the core of the teachings of Ramana, Robert, Nisargadatta and I: the awareness of existence beyond all forms of consciousness of the waking reality, the dream subtle body reality and the causal existence of darkness and emptiness. However, this complete knowledge is only obtained after working through all levels of phenomenal existence, watching these various phenomenologies come and go, and recognizing we are apart from them, they are alien to us, the ultimate witness. All these states and things are experiences, objects to us as witness, who lies entirely beyond existence as the subject. The subject, the witness, is at the core of the sense of I. Following the thread of the I-sense through all the levels of existence reveals the existence of the subject as beyond all of that.)

Can we eliminate these three bodies? Certainly we can, because they are only our sheaths and are extraneous to us. From what is extraneous to us, we can separate ourself. It is within our ability. Only when we thus separate ourself from these sheaths, which are extraneous to us, will we know our true nature. According to the truth which we have already established, namely that our true nature itself is happiness, knowing our true nature is itself experiencing perfect happiness. Thus, the experience of Self-knowledge (*atma-swarupanubhava*) is the very pinnacle of happiness. It is the ultimate goal for which all living beings are knowingly or unknowingly searching through all their innumerable endeavours. Attaining – through the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ – the knowledge (*chit*) of our reality (*sat*) as the perfect happiness (*ananda*) is the supreme goal of mankind. The sole cause of all miseries is the mistake of veiling ourself by imagining these sheaths to be ourself, even though we are ever this existence-consciousness-bliss (*satch it-ananda*).

From Robert Adams:

Before I am by Robert Adams; Satsang, November 1, 1990.

Robert: Let me ask you a question. Where do you think you were, or what were you, prior to consciousness? What do you think you were? Who can tell me? Before you came into this body, before you became conscious, what were you?

S (Henry Dennison (H.D.)): You mean prior to individual consciousness...?

R: Yes.

S: (Henry D.)...as opposed to consciousness itself?

R: Both.

S: (H.D.) Is there any prior to consciousness?

R: Yes, there is.

S: Prior to consciousness. Would that be consciousness at rest - no content?

R: Exactly. What were you prior to that?

S: (H.D.) There is no prior.

R: There's no prior. Are you sure?

S: (H.D.) Yes.

R: Any more bright answers?

S: (Henry D.) There can't be! It's absurd!

S: (Bob Solaman) Why can't there be, though, why would you just dismiss it entirely?

S: (Henry D.) Because consciousness is fundamental. Consciousness is all. It's all that is. What can be prior to totality, to all that is?

R: Tell me.

S: (Ed Muzika) Anything that would be said would only be a concept and would be in phenomenality. It would miss the point entirely. ([Listen to audio of that Satsang here..](#))

R: That is the answer. You got it. As long as you can describe it (or experience it as Robert considered all experience as illusion), it's not that. It's a mystery. It's beyond description. The finite can never comprehend the infinite. So as long as you can describe it, and you can talk about it, it's not that. And this is something you should always remember.

(Comment by Ed: Whatever I am cannot be in phenomenality. It cannot be an object of or in consciousness. The self is the subject, entirely beyond the phenomenal world.)

R: So the answer is silence. That's the correct answer. You are space, and now you appear to be the image superimposed on space. Now why do you identify with the image, but prior to consciousness you were not the space, really, nor the image? The reason I say you were not the space is because we can talk about it.

(COMMENT by Ed: Here Robert is saying you are even beyond the Void.)

R: As long as you can talk about it, as long as you can describe it, as long as you can argue about it, as long as you stick up for your rights and say it's this or it's that, you're wrong. Not really wrong, just on the wrong track, because if you are wrong, then something is right, and nothing is right, so there's nothing wrong. It goes beyond dualistic concepts.

R: For as long as you search, you'll never find it. After all, ask what you are searching for. You are searching for something that you already are. That's why you can never find it. If you were not that, then you would search, but you're already that, so searching becomes fruitless.

(Comment: Back then, at this Satsang, Robert did not like the term witness, but he did so in other Satsangs. Robert did not want to give the self a name or attach a concept such as the absolute or witness, as that would make it an object, a thing, and the subject can never be an object or known as having qualities. Self is entirely beyond the universe yet witness to it.

The witness is the subject, I: it happens to me, or I experience it, or I see or hear it, or otherwise sense it. When one accurately holds onto the I-sense, penetrates through all

perceptions, concepts and images, through the darkness of the causal experience, it becomes itself, I become myself. Awareness becomes both aware and aware of itself being aware. That is, attention becomes the witness, the I, and “turns around,” cognizing all, but resting in the knowledge that that all is really alien to me who is at rest. The world and all internal objects are second and third persons, while "I" the first person, is mystery, the ultimate unknowable.

I would note here that in other places Robert states you recognize that the entire observable universe emanates from your mind. That is true, but the mind itself has no real existence. It is appearance only as is the world that it creates, and is not you.)

R: Ramana Maharshi said that the only problem you've really got is that you believe that you were born.

S: That was your leading question today, “What were we before we were born?”

R: Prior to consciousness.

S: Which is really at the time of birth isn't it? Consciousness?

R: At the time of birth, yes, consciousness takes place. But prior to conscious there is nothing - space.

S: There wasn't even potential for consciousness.

R: Absolute zero.

S: But there was something there which was a concept, before.

R: As long as there is some thing, it's not that. There's no thing whatsoever. It's beyond words and thoughts.

S: But there is something.

R: What is it? What?

S: No, I was asking you.

R: It's a mystery. Nobody knows.

S: We don't know what, but there was something.

R: There's nothing. But nothing is beyond the senses so it sounds stupid. When your mind is quiet and peaceful, and you sit in the silence, then you become that you're referring to. And that's none other than yourself. But don't try to explain the self. Once you try to explain it, it's not it.

S: The self then is just a word pointing to something that is wordless, indescribable and can not be possibly explained.

R: Yes

S: But it indicates, it's like a finger pointing.

R: Like an arrow, a finger pointing to the moon.

(Comment: That is, this something is out of the world of existence and knowledge as we know it. You have to be it. In being it, it is revealed that something is there entirely beyond existence, life and death.)

Robert Adams, Four Principals, August 1990.

I can only speak from my own experience. There's no difference, to me, in the waking state, the dreaming state, the sleeping state, or the vision state. They're all the same.

I'm aware of all of them, but I am not them. I observe them. I see them happening. As a matter of fact, sometimes I can not tell the difference.

Sometimes I don't know whether I'm dreaming, or awake, or having a vision, or I'm asleep. It's all the same, because I take a step backward, and I watch myself going through all these things.

(Comment by Ed: "I step backward and I watch myself." He watches the coming and going of the different states of consciousness, waking, dreaming and sleep. He is separate and knows they are not he. They are object, he is the mystery of the subject or witness. They are consciousness, he is beyond that.

One more step is needed to reach this state. You are aware of the world and all the inner objects too, but you are also aware that you are aware, even though that "you" has no objective appearance. This is not an infinite regression. You are aware that you are aware. It stops there. It is not that you are aware that you are aware, of something that is aware, etc.

When I had my second awakening, I was aware that the world, dream and nothingness states had nothing to do with me. I was apart from them and they came over me like clouds, first waking, then dream then sleep, and I was aware I was apart from those states, and, in fact, I had nothing to do with them, yet I had no existence as a thing.

Therefore there were several processes going on. I recognized I existed. I recognized that all that I had thought made existence, such as waking and sleep states, had nothing to do with me. And lastly, there was the knowledge of transcendence. I was transcendent and I knew I was transcendent.

I was beyond all, untouchable by fire or sword, life or death. I was the real unborn, not the unborn that the neo-advaitins talk about, which for them has something to do with recognizing that the lowly I-thought had no objective ego thing associated.

There is a billion light years of difference between seeing that there is no objective personal ego self associated with the I-thought, and the recognition of I as the transcendent, beyond heaven and earth.)

CHAPTER THREE (PROVISIONAL) NISARGADATTA ON THE NEED FOR PRACTICE AND MEDITATION

There is a deep misconception spread by many neo Advaita teachers that not only are meditation, self-inquiry, or any spiritual practice not necessary, but any effort made at all will strengthen the non-existent ego, and prevent awakening. They state we are already awake and merely need to get rid of the idea we are not awake. That not-awake misconception is to be dissipated merely by hearing the words over and over, that you are already complete, perfect, and the absolute. Just stop and realize that.

One of the main goals of this book is to point out that persistent effort at self-exploration and self-abidance is necessary for a true awakening experience as opposed to a conceptual understanding that the self is never not awake and you are that.

So far, Chapter One explored Ramana Maharshi's charge that self-inquiry and self-abidance are necessary for awakening. Chapter Two focused on the need to go beyond the oneness state that comes when you realize there is no objective entity or ego associated with the I-thought, and the I-thought itself is like a ghost with no real existence. In this oneness state, nothing separate exists but the totality of consciousness.

Robert Adams was also quoted as saying that the deepest level of existence in all of us, lies deeper than consciousness, or the oneness mind of the totality of consciousness, achieved at the first awakening. What you are lies beyond the manifest. Once the distinction of manifest, or totality consciousness, is made, the dual concept of the unmanifest, or noumenal state without any consciousness or quality whatsoever becomes a primary concept.

However, later it will be learned that both concepts of the manifest oneness and the unborn unmanifest are only ideas, neither exist in reality, and what you are is beyond both.

In this chapter we will explore what Nisargadatta Maharaj said about the need for effort and practice, as well as his statement that he practiced, dong little else, for three years, meditating on his sense of I Am. Then he attained awakening.

The neo Advaitins and many who have been misled by **READING** (as opposed to practicing) some of the Rinzai teachers, such as Huang Po, Bankei, and many others, ignore the fact that they struggled for many years to understand the truth that Buddha mind was always there and plainly functioning, and jump to the conclusion they are the effortless Buddha Mind, which becomes just another concept because the conceptual mind has not been destroyed.

Below are many quotes of Nisargadatta and their sources as arranged by Rajiv Kapur. The neo Advaitins are always quoting Nisargadatta but strangely leave out quotes that long and patient practice is necessary. At this point Rajiv and I are trying to locate Maharaj's original audio Satsang recordings to get better translations. You see, correct translations are totally in the mind of the translator. The more subtle teachings require translation by someone who understand

deeply the originating language, and who has meditated long enough to have attained a mind subtle enough to thoroughly understand Maharaj's deeper teachings.

Nisargadatta Maharaj Quotes

I simply followed his (Maharaj's Guru) instruction which was to sit for hours together with nothing but the "I am" in my mind and soon peace and joy and a deep embracing love became my normal state.

(I AM THAT PG 239)

Follow my advice implicitly and you will not be disappointed. I cannot solve your problem by mere words. You have to act on what I told you and persevere. It is not the right advice that liberates, but the ACTION based on it.

(I AM THAT PG 248)

Discover all you are not. Body, feelings, thoughts, ideas, time, space, being and not being, this or that. A mere verbal statement will not do. You may repeat a formula endlessly without any result whatsoever. You must watch yourself continuously--particularly your mind moment by moment, missing nothing. This witnessing is essential for the separation of the Self from the not Self.

(I AM THAT PG 27)

I was a simple man, but I trusted my Guru. What he told me what to do, I did. He told me to concentrate on "I am"- I did. I gave him my heart and soul, my entire attention and the whole of my spare time. As a result of faith and earnest application, I realized my Self within three years.

(I AM THAT PG 52)

(Comment: Notice that Maharaj states he became self-realized after three years of practice. He did not state like many neo-Advaitins, that there is no self-realization because there is no self to be realized. He also states he practiced for three years with all his heart and soul to realize who he is. This is completely contrary to the advice of many neo-advaitin gurus and teachers.

Effort is very much needed. When ignorance becomes obstinate and hard and the character gets perverted, effort and the pain of it become inevitable.

(I AM THAT PG 114)

Go on pondering, wondering, being anxious to find a way. Be conscious of yourself, watch your mind, and give it your full attention. Don't look for quick results; there may be none within your noticing.

(I AM THAT PG 125)

When you listen to this you feel satisfaction and with that matter ends for most people, they don't meditate on this again and again and try to find out that principle behind everything.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 57)

(Comment: Is this not the state of most neo-Advaitins? Most people do not meditate on this again and again.)

Sitting in meditation helps the consciousness to blossom. It causes deeper understanding and spontaneous change in behavior. These changes take place naturally, automatically, by themselves, due to Meditation.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 86)

This knowledge that you are the manifest must be opened through meditation, you do not get it by listening to words.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 107)

In practicing meditation the life force gets purified, and when it is purified, the light of the Self shines forth, but the working principle is the life force. When this purified life force and the light of the Atman merge, then the concept, the mind, the imagination, everything is taken away.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 25)

You must have a thorough knowledge of this consciousness, and having known everything about the consciousness you come to the conclusion that it is all unreal, and then it should drop off. Having listened to these talks, sit and meditate, "That which I have heard, is it true or not?"

Then you will understand that this is also to be discarded.

(CONSCIOUSNESS AND ABSOLUTE PG 16)

Ultimately one must go beyond knowledge, but the knowledge must come, and knowledge can come by constant meditation. By meditating, the knowledge "I Am" gradually settles down and merges with universal knowledge, and thereby becomes totally free, like the sky, or space.

(CONSCIOUSNESS AND ABSOLUTE PG 17)

At the highest level all spiritual disciplines are to be dropped but at the earlier levels you have to do your homework.

(CONSCIOUSNESS AND ABSOLUTE PG 17)

If you have to make an effort in the beginning not to get involved, make that effort until it becomes effortless.

(CONSCIOUSNESS AND ABSOLUTE PG 34)

You should meditate; you should not lose what you have learned. When one disidentifies with the body, one transcends not only the body but consciousness as well since consciousness is a product of the body. The consciousness no longer says, " *I Am*", " *I Am*".

(CONSCIOUSNESS AND ABSOLUTE PG 49)

(Comment: As explained more thoroughly in the next chapter, Maharaj is very explicit: You must go beyond consciousness, for is not manifest consciousness totally associated with the body? If there were not a body with eyes, would there be any vision of the world? If there were not a body with ears, would there be any sound? The same holds true for other sensations. Without a body, the world would not exist as an object of consciousness. There would be no world.)

You must have a strong conviction; that conviction means not only "I Am" but it means I am free from "I Am" also. And that conviction means practicing.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 119)

For this keep steadily in the focus of Consciousness the only clue you have: your certainty of being. Be with it, play with it, ponder over it, delve deeply into it, till the shell of ignorance breaks open and you emerge into the realm of reality.

(I AM THAT PG 272)

When I say; remember 'I am' all the time, I mean : come back to it repeatedly'.

(I AM THAT PG 242)

The word 'I am' itself is the bridge. Remember it, think of it, explore it, go around it, look at it from all the directions, dive into it with earnest perseverance; endure all delays and disappointments till suddenly the mind turns around.

(I AM THAT PG 435)

Ask yourself; 'To whom it all happen?' Use everything as an opportunity to go within.

(I AM THAT PG 448)

Experience cannot be conveyed through words. It comes with action. A man who is intense in his experience will radiate confidence and courage. Others too will act and gain experience born out of action.

(I AM THAT PG 514)

Know the inside-out of consciousness and recognize it as useless; it is a fraud. When you transcend it, you will say, "I can manage without this. This is imperfect! Therefore, meditate in order to know the consciousness.

(CONSCIOUSNESS AND ABSOLUTE PG 52)

If you have the urge to go to the toilet, you will run. Similarly, the need of the ignorant is the urge to have knowledge, he will rush towards it. In the ignorant state, if you keep quiet, then the principle will keep quiet. Until there is a firm conviction about oneself, something or other has to be done.

(I AM UNBORN PG 5)

Chapter Four

Nisargadatta on the structure of self

Rajiv Kapur

The word 'I AM' or Beingness was a word used extensively by Maharaj in almost all of his discourses. He considered it to be the most valuable tool for effective Sadhana for Self-Realization. He made it clear that it was not the word 'I AM' but the wordless 'IAM', the IAMness or Pure beingness, which a seeker needed to latch on and explore it in all its manifestations. The term 'Pure Being' or IAMness is not just an ordinary sense of existence which a seeker experiences in his normal waking state of Consciousness but rather extends far beyond it, traveling downwards into the subtle dream state and even further down into the Causal deep sleep state of Consciousness. The Quotes given below of Maharaj clearly indicate this fact and also about the importance of regular and intensive meditation in order to realize or stabilize ourselves in that state of pure beingness or IAMness.

The quotes given below have various hidden subtle truths. In the light of my meditative experiences and the blessings of my Master Edji and Nisargadatta Maharaj, I have managed courage to provide few hints and insights in form of my comments. I hope it can serve some purpose for the hard working meditator.

NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ QUOTES

ON "IAM" AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

When you are space you are no more the body, but whatever is contained in the space, and the space, you are. You are now manifest-whatever is known-the space.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 147)

Comment : The above quote is indicative of the state of Oneness with the totality of Consciousness (Universal Consciousness). This is state experienced when one transcends the I-

thought. Most Sadhakas are stuck at this level but this is mostly one form of IAMness--the waking state part of Consciousness--and not the IAMness in its entirety. That is why Maharaj said in the below two quotes:

Now, consciousness has identified with a form. Later, it understands that it is not that form and goes further. In a few cases it may reach the (entirety of) space (the void), and very often, there it stops.

(CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE ABSOLUTE PG 13)

People will stop only at seeing the manifest. Who will go behind the manifest and see that the manifest and unmanifest are not two--they are one?

(Comment: That is most people stop with the visible, what is presented in waking consciousness, such as the totality of space, or the specific objects of the world, or ones inner images and thinking.)

The manifest is seen as light while the unmanifest as dark but “what is” is the same thing--**THAT WHICH PERCEIVES BOTH.**

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 110)

(Comment: From the above comments Maharaj clearly points out to the fact that most will stop at what is seen or perceived, the manifested form of Consciousness (gross and astral states) but no one pays attention to the unmanifested form. The unmanifested dark state of nothingness or non-knowingness is the Causal state. And that which lies beyond both these states and perceives them is the Absolute or the real Self. The term ‘IAM’ or Consciousness hence is much more than just ‘what is’ or “is-ness.”

One must never stop effort just because one has seen through the illusion of the I-thought and ego and attained oneness with the totality of waking consciousness, which itself is only a part of the manifest. This is the mistake of the neo-Advaitins.

Given below are the various quotes of Maharaj which will prove that the 'I AM' is much more subtle than what is perceived as ordinary waking state or the manifest (perceivable) form of Consciousness. The unmanifest form (Causal body or state, unknowing or the non-being state) is very much part of IAMness and it too needs to be transcended through intense meditation.

If this part of Consciousness (unmanifest Causal state) is ignored and not known through meditational practices and keen observation, then ignorance and attachment to the unreal remains. A serious seeker must not amuse himself with few achievements happening on waking and subtle levels but go deeper, much deeper and get to know all the manifestations and phenomenon's taking place at all levels namely the gross, subtle and causal states.)

Discover all you are not. Body, feelings, thoughts, ideas, time, space, being and not being, this or that. This witnessing is essential for the separation of the Self from the not Self.

(I AM THAT PG 27)

That causal body, which is very minute, needs to be known. By meditation you can know it. The quality of that causal body takes on the appearance of the consciousness and the form.

(CONSCIOUSNESS AND ABSOLUTE PG 51)

(Comment: That is waking consciousness is an appearance or artifact of something deeper, the causal body, the unknowing and unknown state that must be passed through in meditation.)

Even in the highest saints there is always some doubt about the clarity of 'I AM' and this enquiry of what I am must be gone into at any and all levels.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 123)

My sleep is not the kind you have, it is pure Consciousness. When I sleep there is awareness of total manifestation and also the unmanifest.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 128)

From deep sleep to waking state, what is it? It is the 'I AM' state with no words.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 50)

Behold, the deep sleep in which there is no notion of being this or that. Yet the 'I AM' remains.

(FOREWORD I AM THAT)

You will not comprehend exactly what it means, but as you get established in beingness and transcend that, you will understand how you are beyond deep sleep and waking state, because those are characteristics of the beingness.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 22)

All the three states- of waking, dreaming and sleeping- are subjective, personal, intimate. They all happen and are contained within the little bubble in Consciousness, called 'I'.

(I AM THAT PG 281)

When you say 'I am' it includes waking, sleep and beingness, the 'I am' knowledge includes these.

(I AM UNBORN PG 40)

This knowingness “I AM” which came spontaneously and you felt gradually is the ignorant–child-principle, the Balkrishna State.

Here “Bal” means the child principle and “Krishna” means “non-knowing”

(Quote 103 and 104 of Nisargadatta Gita by Pradeep Apte)

Not only the Conscious but the unconscious as well should be taken care of in our spiritual practice.

(I AM THAT PG 447)

It is only a rare who understands what I am driving at. To a normal spiritual person we have to say, “You do this or that and you will get benefit” But we can’t help because he has no capacity to understand the subtlest aspect of this spirituality. At the most I would say, “You know you are; you worship that “I AM” principle. You worship that, be one with that only, and that “I Amness will disclose all the knowledge.” That’s all I will say, but the subtlest part is this, from deep sleep to waking state. To abide in that. You must go to that limit, but it is very difficult.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 50)

(Comment: From the above it is very clear that the term IAMness, for him, is much more inclusive than the term ‘I’ as used by the neo-Advaitins, and there are various subtle levels involved in it. In fact Maharaj refrained from disclosing the highest truth to general seekers because of the subtleties and lack of understanding in them. Many take his message on the surface and don’t attempt to take notice of these subtle hidden truths. It is impossible to take notice of the finer aspects of IAMness without constant effort in meditation to explore them. Below are a few quotes of Maharaj pointing to the importance of meditation and keen observation as tools to understand the subtleties involved.)

No external activity can reach the inner Self; worship and prayers remain on the surface only; to go deeper meditation is essential, as well as a striving to go beyond the states of sleep, dream and waking.

(I AM THAT PG 447)

First of all there is the knowingness “IAM”, without words, with that knowingness, the world is. Now when the seeker goes into meditation, that knowingness goes into non-knowingness. This is the highest in the hierarchy when the body aspect is there because this knowing and no-knowing are aspects of the body, and body means Consciousness, and in the realm of Consciousness, knowingness and no-knowingness both exists.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 153)

This is the stage where you are-you are not; that is the borderline. The moment you know you are, duality is there, when you do not know you are, you are perfect, but you must go through this process. In deep sleep you do not know you are, but that is grosser state. In this active state you must recede into the state of no-knowingness.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 51)

(Comment: Maharaj states clearly “you must go through the process” but NOT in the grosser state of unaware deep sleep state but in an active, investigating striving. From that aware state of knowingness you move into no-knowingness (borderline) Causal state. This is possible only through deep meditation.)

In deep meditation my Guru indicated how this form and beingness came together and also, the world. That was indicated to me in deep meditation.

(I AM UNBORN PG 76)

(Comment: This is the highest state of deep meditation. The nature of beingness (origin), world and the form are all disclosed in this state. This state is not possible to achieve without the help of Guru. The Guru in Subtle form reveals this secret and guides the road ahead.)

To turn beingness into no-beingness, assiduously follow meditation or else you will be like a calf frisking. Be in meditation and you will stabilize, and then stop there.

(I AM UNBORN PG 69)

Deep Sleep state is something like block of ice; nothing is there, then the warmth is taking place, and with that warmth you feel that you are. This is quite an elevated state

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 136)

(Comment : The “block of ice” is purely an experiential part of Meditation. Page 49 of the book Autobiography of a Jnani explains this process in detail. Edji guided me to this most beautiful state. It is the state of knowingness and no-knowingness, beingness and no-beingness. This is pure beingness state, the Turiya. But still it is a state. The one beyond this state cannot be called a state. It cannot be called as anything. It just is.

Chapter 5

Nisargadatta's Instructions on Self-Abidance

Part of the reason for writing this new series of lessons on self-inquiry, is to make it clear that self-inquiry it is not a simple, look inside a few times type of investigation, find no personal entity there, and then consider that enlightenment.

What Rajiv and I are trying to make clear to the seeker, is that all the great Advaita teachers up until the recent split off of the neo-Advaitins, have strongly urged long and intense introspection on one's inner life, and then abiding in that subjectivity.

Long practice leads to a progressively more sophisticated and powerful discrimination that allows the seeker to apprehend clearly what is real and what is not. Progressive recognition of what is not real is progressive liberation from the vagaries and sufferings of the mind and body. That which is not real then has the same effect as a dreamer realizing the dream now immersed in, is unreal and does not touch him or her, resulting in a greater equanimity, peace and happiness in the most distressing situations.

Then one day, after penetrating through waking consciousness, then the level of thoughts, images and emotions called the subtle body, then the darkness of the causal state, comes one or more liberation or awakening experiences as each level is seen through and totally understood as being unreal, temporary and illusory, with a reversal of the direction of consciousness, now going both inwards and outwards simultaneously. Most of our lives we focus outwards until we begin self-inquiry, which is inwards. After a long such reversal, balance is achieved, and one mind is realized which has no in or out, up or down, good or bad, or objects of any sort.

This teaching then goes beyond the neo advaitin teaching which appears to accept this oneness state as final--the transcendence of thought and the attaining of unity consciousness of oneness in the waking state.

There is no freedom here, because we have not found anything at this level that extends beyond waking consciousness. We have not gone or realized that which is prior to consciousness as is stressed by Robert Adams, Ramana Maharshi and Nisargadatta.

For this lesson, I tasked Rajiv to pour through the various teachings of Nisargadatta Maharaj to find quotes that clearly point out the need for progressive meditation and the development of and ever sharper discrimination leading to pure Jnana.

He has done an extraordinary job.

Below are the teachings of Nisargadatta on practice and progressive discrimination as arranged and explained by Rajiv Kapur.

Ed

N: The indwelling principle 'I am' is common to all and has no attributes; it is the principle of the whole functioning.

(Quote 101 of NISARGADATTA GITA)

N: The only clue you have is your certainty of being. Be with it, play with it, ponder over it, delve deeply into it, till the shell of ignorance breaks open and you emerge into the realm of reality.

(I AM THAT PG 272)

N: Go deep into the sense of 'I am' and you will find. The sense of being, of 'I am' is the first to emerge. Ask yourself whence it comes, or just watch it quietly. After all the sense 'I am' is always with you.

(I AM THAT PG 2)

N: One begins with the lowest levels: social circumstances, customs and habits, physical surroundings, the posture and the breathing of the body, the sense, their sensations and perceptions, the mind, its thoughts and feelings, until the entire mechanism of personality is grasped and firmly held.

(I AM THAT PG 412)

N: If you stay put in beingness the thoughts will get less and less.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 53)

N: People pray to various names and forms, they do not pray to that beingness, that substance, which these names represent. Pray to that beingness only.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 98)

N: Consistently and with perseverance separate the 'I am' from 'this' or 'that', just keep in mind the feeling 'I am'.

(NISARGADATTA GITA VERSE 3)

N: You are sure of the 'I am', it's the totality of being, remember 'I am' and it's enough to heal your mind and take you beyond.

(NISARGADATTA GITA VERSE 5)

(Comment: From the above quotes of Maharaj it is very clear that the practice he mentions to follow is abidance to ones sense of existence or beingness. He says no matter what it is real or unreal, right or wrong, one thing is certain that is the feeling "I exist" and because I exist everything exists too. Therefore start your Sadhana by catching hold of that feeling of existence or beingness and stay there. Intense practice will be required to discover the various qualities and character of 'I am'. As practice deepens more and more is revealed by 'I am' itself.)

N: Discover all you are not. Body, feelings, thoughts, ideas, time, space, being and not-being, this or that. A mere verbal statement will not do- you may repeat a formula endlessly without any result whatsoever. You must watch yourself continuously –particularly your mind-moment by moment, missing nothing. This witnessing is essential for the separation of the self from the not-self.

(I AM THAT PG 27)

N: The first thing you do after waking up is to meditate on that Consciousness, that "I Amness", worship that Consciousness for sometime before you start your daily activities. Before you fall asleep at night, again abide in that Consciousness, "I amness". Be devoted to that.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 64)

N: The word 'I am' itself is the bridge. Remember it, think of it, explore it, go around it, look at it from all the directions, dive into it with earnest perseverance; endure all delays and disappointments till suddenly the mind turns around.

(I AM THAT PG 435)

(Comment: Maharaj mentions clearly that rigorous practice will be needed to fully understand the various manifestations and phenomenon's of I Amness. All true Masters give a

workable method to accomplish this aim as Maharaj does above. Ed Muzika (Edji) also gave something very similar in his chapter “Hunting the I”. It’s a classic manual on practicing Self-inquiry the right way. Notice how similar are the advises given by both)

N: Now reverse; I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not the senses; now you are stabilized in consciousness. After stabilizing in consciousness all further things will happen automatically. You will expand into the manifest.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 51)

N: You will find, when you are the manifest consciousness, you alone are the multiplicity, you express yourself in all this ample, manifest world.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 56)

N: When you are space you are no more the body, but whatever is contained in the space, and the space, you are. You are now manifest-whatever is known-the space.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 147)

(Comment: The above three quotes are indicative of the state of Oneness with Consciousness (Universe Consciousness). This is state experienced when one transcends the I-thought. This is the first awakening. Most Sadhakas are stuck at this level (the first awakening stage) but this is mostly one form of I AMness--the waking state part of Consciousness--and not the I AMness in its entirety as is clear from the quote of Maharaj given below)

N: When the ‘I am myself’ goes, the ‘I am all’ comes. When the ‘I am all’ goes, ‘I am’ comes.

(I AM THAT PG 230)

(Comment: ‘I am myself’ is ordinary state of individual ego, which one identifies at the individual body/mind level. ‘I am all’ is the state of Oneness with the manifested part of Consciousness (the waking state) after transcending individual ego. Now Maharaj clearly points out that after ‘I am all’ (oneness) is transcended ONLY then ‘I AM’ comes. Most stop at “Oneness” (the first awakening).

N: Now you are in the waking state, a person with name and shape, joys and sorrows. The person was not there before you were born, nor will be there after you die. Instead of

struggling with the person to make it become what it is not, why not go beyond the waking state and leave the personal life altogether?

(I AM THAT PG 427)

Since most would stop at “oneness” levels, Maharaj wrote the two quotes below:

N: Now, consciousness has identified with a form. Later, it understands that it is not that form and goes further. In a few cases it may reach the (entirety of) space (the void), and very often, there it stops.

(CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE ABSOLUTE PG 13)

: People will stop only at seeing the manifest. Who will go behind the manifest and see that the manifest and unmanifest are not two-they are one?

(Comment: That is most people stop with the visible, what is presented in waking consciousness, such as the totality of space, or the specific objects of the world, or ones inner images and thinking.)

N: The manifest is seen as light while the unmanifest as dark but “what is” is the same thing-THAT WHICH PERCEIVES BOTH.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 110)

(Comment: From the above comments Maharaj points out to the fact that most will stop at what is seen or perceived, the manifested form of Consciousness (gross and astral states) but no one pays attention to the unmanifested form. The unmanifested dark state of nothingness or non-knowingness is the Causal state. And that which lies beyond both these states and perceives them is the Absolute or the real Self. The term ‘I AM’ or Consciousness hence is much more than just ‘what is’ or “is-ness.”

One must never stop effort just because one has seen through the illusion of the I-thought and ego and attained oneness with the totality of waking consciousness, which itself is only a part of the manifest. This is the mistake of the neo-Advaitins.)

N: Not only the Conscious but the unconscious as well should be taken care of in our spiritual practice.

(I AM THAT PG 447)

(Comment : The practice will involve going deeper than just waking state of oneness and include knowledge of various manifestations of I-ness coming from dream and sleep states and even beyond that.)

N: No external activity can reach the inner Self; worship and prayers remain on the surface only; to go deeper meditation is essential, as well as a striving to go beyond the states of sleep, dream and waking.

(I AM THAT PG 447)

N: This is the stage where you are-you are not; that is the borderline. The moment you know you are, duality is there, when you do not know you are, you are perfect, but you must go through this process. In deep sleep you do not know you are, but that is grosser state. In this active state you must recede into the state of no-knowingness.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 51)

(Comment: Maharaj says “you must go through the process” but NOT in the grosser state of unaware deep sleep state but in an active, investigating striving. From that aware state of knowingness you move into no-knowingness (borderline) Causal state. And then move beyond that too but with awareness (Turiya). This is possible only through deep meditation.

Ed Muzika (Edji) in his own words in the book “Hunting the I” writes “The process of locating phenomena, examining them and playing with them until you know them fully, and then eliminating them as the looker can be longer or shorter. This is the true self-inquiry process, not the one often referred to as mindlessly repeating, “Who am I?”)

N: That causal body, which is very minute, needs to be known. By meditation you can know it. The quality of that causal body takes on the appearance of the consciousness and the form.

(CONSCIOUSNESS AND ABSOLUTE PG 51)

N: I have experienced all four kinds of speech and transcended them. Rarely will anybody follow this hierarchy to stabilize in the Consciousness and transcend Consciousness. Starting from Vaikhara (word), normally we listen to words; from Vaikhari we go to Madhyama (mind-thought); in watching the mind we are in Pashyanti where the concept formation takes

place and from there to Para (I AM- without words), and finally from Para to Prior to Consciousness. This is the line to follow, but only a rare one follows it- receding, reversing.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 116)

(Comment: Maharaj indicates very clear steps in this quote. First comes Vaikhara (words) meaning all outer forms of worships and experiences related to waking state of Consciousness (oneness, beauty and music), then comes Madhyama (mind-thought) meaning the phenomenon's of the subtle dream body (astral experiences) , then the Pashyanti which represents the deep sleep (causal state experiences) and lastly to the Para (I AM –without words) meaning Turiya (the ever blissful fourth and last state of Consciousness). The wordless I AM is nothing other than Turiya and it is this I AM- without word (Pure Beingness) which is always referred by Maharaj and NOT the ordinary state of waking Consciousness (misunderstood as beingness) which needs to be transcended. No ordinary state of waking Consciousness can lead to the Self, steps as above have to be followed and so too the efforts as is clear from above quote of Maharaj. However only rare ones will actually follow the entire line and steps.)

N: The birth principle is “Turiya” which means where Consciousness is.

(Quote 137 of Nisargadatta Gita)

N: Turiya or I AM is always described as the witness state that sees through the waking, dreaming and sleeping.

(Quote 141 of Nisargadatta Gita)

N: The experience that “I AM” or you exist is “Turiya”.

(Quote 138 of Nisargadatta Gita)

(Comment: The I Amness in its most unadulterated or pure form is turiya. The Sadhaka by intense practice and self-abidance reaches this highest state of samadhi by following the steps as given below. Yet this is still a state. It is observed by the looker. The looker is the real “YOU”, the reality)

N: The “I am” in its purity is “turiya”, but I am “turiyatita” (beyond turiya) and living in (as) Reality.

(Quote 221 of Nisargadatta Gita)

N: Get established in the “I am” without words, the “Parvani”, but YOU the absolute are not that.

(Quote 189 of Nisargadatta Gita)

(Comment: Parvani the wordless state of I AM is referred by Maharaj as turiya)

N: The experience that “I am” or you exist is “Turiya”. One who knows “Turiya” is “Turiyatita”, which is my state.

(Quote 138 of Nisargadatta Gita)

N: The “I am” is only a little distance away from the True state, hence it is unreal, for whatever is away from the True state or Reality is unreal.

(Quote 227 of Nisargadatta Gita)

(Comment : Here too the “I am” refers to Turiya as this is the state which is closest to the Absolute (YOU). This is experiential in meditation for as soon as Turiya dissolves, the SELF shines. This SELF cannot be known as a concept. You can only be that)

N: Words are not exactly applicable. I have seen exactly how I am not. In the absence of “I Am”, what that state is, I have seen, or am seeing, therefore I don’t lose anything.

(PRIOR TO CONSCIOUSNESS PG 113)

(Comment: Powerful words for all to ponder. Maharaj states “I have seen exactly how I am not.” These are not empty words but words flowing from a Master who has actually experienced how the I-ness is unreal. The whole of I is a big fraud and the fact that it doesn’t exist comes from knowledge which flows in deep meditation when the I- Consciousness is killed. It is NOT an intellectual knowing that the I is not real but purely experiential.)

N: The first step is to go and dwell in the “I am”. From there you go beyond Consciousness and no-Consciousness to the infinite Absolute, which is the permanent state.

(Quote 229 of Nisargadatta Gita)

(Comment : To conclude we can say two steps are given by Maharaj for effective Self-inquiry ,first is to dwell or ponder on the various manifestations of I Amness and reach the purest form through meditation, Turiya, and then to go beyond that and meet the Absolute (Self or looker).

Ed Muzika (Edji) gives a very similar approach to Self-inquiry. Edji states in *Hunting the I* on page 143 “So there are two steps: locate the looker, as the subject of sensations, and try to play with it to observe all its manifestations, and then to rest in the looker, relax and let the looker look, and become the looker only.”

Chapter 6 (Amended 6-12)

Going Beyond the Void

Self-Inquiry According to Ramana Maharshi

Once again I turn towards the Path of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Part I, by Sadhu Om and Michael James to reveal exactly what Ramana meant by self-inquiry or self abidance. Michael is one of two Ramana scholars and practitioners who remain alive and whom I deeply respect. The other is David Godman.

Michael supports his every conclusion with copious quotes from Ramana's works.

Once again, as with Nisargadatta, you'll see that Ramana suggests careful attention be paid to the I sense, and in that, the I-thought will be revealed to be a fraud. Later, the waking consciousness is revealed to be temporary and conditional based on words and concepts. Then, even the sleep state is seen to be an experience. All this is revealed by dwelling on the I-sense.

Chapter 8, The Path of Self-Inquiry from PSR1

On account of this fear of death, the concentration of Sri Bhagavan was fixed and deeply immersed in Self-attention in order to find out 'What is my existence? What is it that dies?'. Thus it is proved by what Sri Bhagavan Himself did that, as we have been explaining all along, only such a firm fixing of our attention on Self is 'Self-enquiry' (atma-vichara). He has confirmed the same idea in the work 'Who am I?', where He says: "Always keeping the mind (the attention) fixed In Self (in the feeling 'I') alone is called Self-enquiry' ... Remaining firmly in Self-abidance, without giving even the least room to the rising of any thought other than- the thought of Self (that is, without giving even the least attention to any second or third person, but

only to Self), is surrendering oneself to God (which alone is called parabhakti, the supreme devotion⁶⁵)”.

Therefore, discarding the corpse-like body as an actual corpse and remaining without even uttering the word ‘I’ vocally —

“Discarding the body as a corpse, not uttering the word ‘I’ by mouth, but seeking with the mind diving inwards ‘Whence does this I rise ?’ alone is the path of knowledge (jnana marga) ...”
‘Ulladhu Narpadhu’, verse 29

“When sought within ‘What is the place from which it rises as I?’, ‘I’ (the ego) will die. This is Self-enquiry.”

‘Upadesa Undhiyar’, verse 19

“If without leaving it we just be, the sphurana, completely annihilating the feeling of individuality – the ego, ‘I am the body’, finally will come to an end just as the camphor flame dies out. This alone is proclaimed to be liberation by Sages and scriptures.

“Although in the beginning, on account of the tendencies towards sense-objects (vishaya-vasanas) which have been recurring down the ages, thoughts rise in countless numbers like the waves of the ocean, they will all perish as the aforesaid Self-attention becomes more and more intense. Since even the doubt “Is it possible to destroy all of them and to remain as Self alone ?” is only a thought, without giving room even to that thought, one should persistently cling fast to Self-attention. However great a sinner one may be, if, not lamenting ‘Oh, I am a sinner! How can I attain salvation?’ but completely giving up even the thought that one is a sinner, one is steadfast in Self-attention, one will surely be saved. Therefore everyone, diving deep within himself with desirelessness (vairagya), can attain the pearl of Self.

(Comment: Who now can doubt that Ramana advocated very strong concentration or meditation practices such as focusing on the sense of ‘I’ that eventually destroys the I-thought?)

“As long as there are tendencies towards sense-objects in the mind, (since they will always create some subtle or gross world-appearance) so long the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ is necessary. As and when thoughts rise of their own accord, one should annihilate all of them through enquiry then and there in their very place of origin. What is the means to annihilate them? If other thoughts rise disturbing Self-attention, one should, without attempting to complete them, enquire ‘To whom did they rise?, It will “then be known ‘To me’; immediately, if we observe ‘Who is this I that thinks?’, the mind (our power of attention which was hitherto engaged in thinking of second and third persons) will turn back to its source (Self). Hence (since no one is there to attend to them), the other thoughts which had risen will also subside. By repeatedly practising thus, the power of the mind to, abide in its source increases.

(Comment: Again, Ramana is advocating concentrating on the I, not on any object in the world or mind, but on the subject, the unchanging singularity in the subtle body. Like I've stated in the book *Autobiography of a Jnani*, and on the *itisnotreal.com* website, it is necessary to build spiritual energy that allows for a courageous faith in oneself, but also allows increasing discrimination. Jorika, meditation power, leads to Prajna, wisdom.)

When the mind thus abides in the Heart, the first thought, 'I' ('I am the body', the rising 'I'), which is the root of all other thoughts, itself having vanished, the ever-existing Self (the being 'I') alone will shine. The place (or state) where even the slightest trace of the thought 'I' ('I am this, that, the body, Brahman and so on') does not exist, alone is Self. That alone is called Silence (*maunam*).

“After coming to know that the final decision of all the scriptures (*sastras*) is that such destruction of the mind alone is liberation (*mukti*), to read scriptures unlimitedly is fruitless. In order to destroy the mind, it is necessary to enquire who one is; then how, instead of enquiring thus within oneself, to enquire and know who one, is in scriptures? For Rama to know himself to be Rama, is a mirror necessary? (That is to say, for one to know oneself through Self-attention to be 'I am', are scriptures necessary?) 'Oneself' is within the five sheaths, whereas the scriptures are outside them. Therefore, how can oneself, who is to be attended to within, setting aside even the five sheaths, be found in scriptures? Since scripture-enquiry is futile, one should give it up and take to Self-enquiry” – thus says Bhagavan Sri Ramana.⁶⁷

(Comment: This is an extremely important point. You will never attain enlightenment just by reading the scriptures or listening to lectures from a third person. Ultimately you have to find out for yourself in your own experience what is true or false, and believe in yourself. In fact, all words and concepts are illusory. Therefore, truth lies outside words, and lies in understanding what is real and not real, self and not self. The best books can do, or talks, is to be a pointer, but when you take the pointer as truth you become bogged down by other people's concepts. Even this is a concept, so beware.)

At this point Michael James spends a lot of time exploring an analogy to self inquiry in the form of following a beam of light reflected off a mirror, until the seeker finds the mirror, and turns around and sees the world basked in sunlight, analogous to the experience of the Void.)

Because of his mere search for the source of the reflected ray of the sun, does not the man now, after leaving the dark room, stand in the open space in a state of void created by the non-existence of that reflected ray? This is the state of the aspirant remaining in the Heart-space (*hridayakasa*) in the state of great void (*maha sunya*) created, through mere Self-attention, by the non-existence of the ego-'I'. The man who has come out of the room into the open space is dazed and laments, “Alas ! The sun that guided me so far (the reflected sun) is now lost”, At this moment, a friend of his standing in the open space comes to him with these words of solace,

“Where were you all this time? Were you not in the dark room! Where are you now? Are you not in the open space! When you were in the dark room, that which guided you out was just one thin ray of light; but here (in this vast open space) are not the rays of light countless and in an unlimited mass? What you saw previously was not even the direct sunlight, but only a reflected ray! But what you are now experiencing is the direct (saksha) sunlight. When the place where you are now is nothing but the unlimited space of light, can a darkness come into existence because of the void created by the disappearance of the reflected ray? Can its disappearance be a loss? Know that its disappearance itself is the true light; it is not darkness”.

Similarly, by the experience of the great void (maha sunya) created by the annihilation of the ego, the aspirant is somewhat taken aback, ‘Alas ! Even the ‘I’ consciousness (the ego) which I was attending to in my sadhana till now as a beacon-light is lost ! Then is there really no such thing at all as ‘Self’ (atman)?’. At that very moment, the Sadguru, who is ever shining as his Heart, points out to him thus, “Can the destruction of the ego, which is only an infinitesimal reflected consciousness, be really a loss? Are you not clearly aware not only of its former existence, but also of the present great void created by its disappearance? Therefore, know that you, who know even the void as ‘this is a void’, alone are the true knowledge; you are not a void⁷⁰ !”, in an instant as a direct experience of the shining of his own existence-consciousness by touching (flashing as sphurana) in Heart as Heart!

(Comment: Be careful here. Raman/Michael took two steps in one sentence. He says the I consciousness associated with the body, the ego, disappears leaving no more a discrete I-sense. Instead, the I is now the totality of consciousness, including the Void or space that contains everything.

But then he says, “You are not the Void, the space, you are that knowledge that you are not the Void.” This is complicated, but also contained in that same sentence, is implicit that you are that to which the knowledge occurred that you are not the void.

If you go back to the earlier chapter where Robert discusses prior to consciousness, he says EXACTLY the same thing, including the distinction between individual and universal consciousness, both of which are transcended.

The knowledge you are not the void is the last experiential vestige of you in this world, but more than that, there is an almost immediate recognition that you, as something totally out of the world and mysterious, are that to which the knowledge occurs, as well as the cognition of the Void and the world.

In the end, you transcend even transcendental knowledge, and attain a bold independence from the world, from cognition, from the body and even from awakening. Now you need and are nothing. This is the highest truth.)

Clinging to the consciousness 'I' and thereby acquiring a greater and greater intensity of concentration upon it, is diving deep within. Instead of thus diving within, many, thinking that they are engaged in Self-enquiry, sit down for hours together simply repeating mentally or vocally, "Who am I?" or "Whence am I?". There are others again who, when they sit for enquiry, face their thoughts and endlessly repeat mentally the following questions taught by Sri Bhagavan. "To whom come these thoughts? To me; who am I?", or sometimes they even wait for the next thought to come up so that they can fling these questions at it! Even this is futile. Did we sit to hold thus a court of enquiry, calling one thought after another! Is this the sadhana of diving within! Therefore, we should not remain watching 'What is the next thought?'. Merely to keep on questioning in this manner is not Self-attention. Concerning those who thus merely float on the surface of the thought-waves; keeping their mind on these questions instead of diving within by attending to the existence- consciousness with a keen mind, thereby controlling mind, breath and all the activities of the body and senses, Sri Bhagavan says:

"Compare him who asks himself 'Who am I?' and 'From which place am I?', though he himself exists all the while as Self, to a drunken man who prattles 'Who am I?' and 'Where am I?'. "

(Comment: This is an extremely important thought. Merely chasing the thoughts by mindless asking, "Who am I?" or "From where did I come?," is an idiot's task.

Unfortunately elsewhere, both Ramana and Robert taught a lower form of self-inquiry which is exactly questioning where a thought came from, or asking, "Who am I?" You have to realize that such kindergarten types of meditation are for beginners who have difficulty introspecting at all. If they practice thus for a while, perhaps they will see that thoughts arise and disappear into something beyond consciousness, the causal body, and begin to dive after the thought to find its origin, and later the origin of the I-thought.

The proper technique of self inquiry is to close your eyes and seek within the sense of I ever deeper until you get to the void. Unfortunately, I did exactly that for years and got trapped in the void as a way of living, and the way out of that void is to see that it too, is an object, something that I am aware of and apart from. I am a mysterious beyond and at the same time, nothing at all. Until the last vestiges of the personal is gone, you need to practice following the I, merging with it and transcending of it. This can be felt going on even during the night, when you wake in the morning and still find the searching for I taking place, as if it had never stopped.

However, watching the 'I' while falling asleep can often lead to long periods of sleeplessness, because you stay awake. It is far easier to see the continuance of consciousness, which I can apprehend in sleep, when you awake and watch the transition from sleep or dream to waking, and immediately grasp that you have not been touched by these passing states of consciousness.)

Therefore, all that we are to practise is to be still (*summa iruppadu*) with the remembrance of the feeling 'I'. It is only when there is a slackness of vigilance during Self-attention that thoughts, which are an indication of it, will rise. In other words, if thoughts rise it means that our Self-attention is lost. It is only as a contrivance to win back Self-attention from thought – attention that Sri Bhagavan advised us to ask, 'To whom do these thoughts appear?' Since the answer 'To me' is only a dative form of 'I', it will easily remind us of the nominative form, the feeling 'I'. However, if we question, 'Who thinks these thoughts?', since the nominative form, the feeling 'I', is obtained as an answer, will not Self-attention, which has been lost unnoticed, be regained directly? This regaining of Self-attention is actually being Self (that is, remaining or abiding as Self)! Such 'being' alone is the correct *sadhana*⁷¹ ; *sadhana* is not doing, but being!!

(Comment: This is a very important understanding. When effort is made to focus on an object, what Michael calls a second or third person, that is effort of the ego. But when attention is paid to the sense of I, you are really acting in consonance with consciousness's primary identification—self attention. Though it feels effortful at first, later it is recognized that that self-attention is the most fundamental property of consciousness, and is really not effortful at all. It only appears effortful because we lost touch with that ever inward flowing consciousness.)

Some complain, "When the very rising of the ego from sleep is so surreptitious as to elude our notice, how can we see whence it rises? It seems to be impossible!" That is true, because the mind's effort of attention is absent in sleep, since the mind itself is not at all there! As ordinary people are not acquainted with the knowledge of their 'being' but only with the knowledge of their 'doing' (that is, the knowledge of their making efforts), for such people it is impossible to know from sleep the rising of the ego from there. Since the effort considered by

them as necessary is absent in sleep, it is no wonder that they are unable to commence the enquiry from sleep itself! But, since the whole of the waking state is a mere sportive play of the ego and since the effort of the mind here is under the experience of everyone, at least in the waking state one can turn and attend to the pseudo 'I' shining in the form 'I am so-and-so'.

The enquiry begins only during the leisure hours of the waking state when one sits for practice. Just as a thing comes to our memory when its name, is thought of, does not the first person feeling come to everyone's memory as soon as the name (pronoun) 'I' is thought of? Although this first person feeling is only the ego, the pseudo 'I' - consciousness, it does not matter. Having our attention withdrawn from second and third persons and clinging to the first person – that alone is sadhana. As soon as the attention turns towards the first person feeling, not only do other thoughts disappear, but also the first thought, the rising and expanding pseudo 'I' - consciousness, itself begins contracting !

(Comment: Again a very important point. Most everything done on the spiritual path is done from waking consciousness, because the mind is absent in deep sleep, and directed concentration is impossible. Initial awakening also comes in waking consciousness. Ultimately you have to experience the Voidness of the subtle body as being you, then transcending that understanding, and then you need to sink into and through the darkness of ignorance, deep sleep, even while retaining your identity. When the awaking to oneness consciousness takes place may not be the same for all. For me, the awakening to oneness preceded apprehending that I was before all consciousness. Perhaps for others the progression is different. I summarized my second awakening in the phrase, "Everything is One, and the One is not real.")

Just as a rubber ball⁷² gains greater and greater momentum while bouncing down the staircase, the more the concentration in clinging to the first person consciousness is intensified the faster is the contraction of the first thought (the ego), till finally it merges in its source. That which now merges thus is only the adjunct (upadhi), the feeling 'so-and-so' which, at the moment of waking, came and mixed with the pure existence-consciousness, which was shining in sleep as 'I am', to constitute the form of the ego, 'I am so-and-so', 'I am this' or 'I am that'. That is, what has come and mixed now slips away. All that an aspirant can experience in the beginning of his practice is only the slipping away (subsidence) of the ego. Since the aspirant tracks down the ego from the waking state, where it is in full play, in the beginning it is possible for him to cognize only its removal. But to cognize its rising (how it rises and holds on to 'I am') from sleep will be more difficult for him at this stage.

When Self-attention is started from the waking consciousness 'I am so-and-so', since it is only the adjunct, the feeling 'so-and-so', that slips away (because it is merely non-existent, an unreal thing [the unreal dies and the Reality alone survives, 'satyameva jayate']), the aspirant even now (when 'so-and-so' has dropped off) feels no loss to the consciousness 'I am' which he had experienced in the waking state. Now he attains a state which is similar to the sleep he has experienced every day and which is devoid of all and everything (because, 'The ego is verily all – sarvam'⁷³, since the whole universe, which is nothing but thoughts, is an expansion of the ego). But a great difference is now experienced by him between the sleep that, without his knowledge, has been coming and overwhelming him all these days due to the complete exhaustion of mind and body, and this sleep which is now voluntarily brought on and experienced by him with the full consciousness of the waking state. How?

“Because there is consciousness, this is not sleep, and because there is the absence of thoughts, it is not the waking state it is therefore the existence- consciousness (sat-chit), the unbroken nature of Siva (akhandā siva-swarupam). Without leaving it, abide in it with great love.”

‘Sadhanai Saram’ 74

Whenever the aspirant during the time of sadhana becomes extroverted from this voluntarily brought-about sleep-like state, he feels absolutely certain, 'I was not sleeping, but was all the while fully conscious of myself'. But, though his real aspect (existence-consciousness) is ever knowing without he least doubt its own existence in sleep as 'I am', whenever he becomes extroverted from everyday sleep, since he (the mind) did not even once have the experience of continuing to know 'I am' from the waking state, he can only say, 'I slept, I did not know myself at that time', The truth is this: since the state of his Self-existence, devoid of the adjunct 'so-and-so', is traced out and caught hold of in the voluntarily brought-about sleep with the full consciousness (prajna) continuing from the waking state, the knowledge that the pure existence-consciousness (sat-chit) knows itself as 'I am' is clear in this sleep state. That is why the aspirant now says, 'I did exist throughout, I did not sleep' ! But prior to his sadhana, since he was throughout the waking state identifying as 'I' the mind, which is the form of the adjunct 'so-and-so', after waking up from the ordinary daily sleep, where the mind did not exist, this mind (the man) says, 'I did not exist in sleep' ! That is all!!

Those who experience many times this removal of the ego through practice, since they have an acquaintance with the experience of their pure existence-consciousness as 'I am' even after the removal of the ego, can minutely cognize, even at the moment of just waking up from sleep, how the adjunct 'so-and-so' comes and mixes. Those who do not have such strength of practice cannot cognize, from sleep itself, the ego at its place of rising. The only thing that is easy for them is to find the ego's place of setting (which is also its place of rising) through the

effort started from the waking state. In either case, the end and the achievement will be the same. When the attention is focused deeper and deeper within towards the feeling 'I am' and when the ego thereby shrinks more and more into nothingness, our power of attention becomes subtler than the subtlest atom and thereby grows sharper and brighter. Hence, the strength of abidance (nishtha-bala) will now be achieved to remain balanced between two states, that is, in a state after the end of sleep and before waking up, in other words, before being possessed by the first thought. Through this strength, the skill will now be gained by the aspirant to find out the adjunct 'so and so', which comes and mixes, to be a mere second person (that is, although it has hitherto been appearing as if it were the first person, it will now be clearly seen to be his mere shadow, non-Self, the primal sheath, a thing alien to him).

“As you practise more and more abiding in this existence-consciousness (that is, remaining in the state between sleep and waking), the ordinary sleep which had previously been taking possession of you will melt away, and the waking which was full of sense-knowledges (vishayas) will not creep in again, Therefore repeatedly and untiringly abide in it,”

‘Sadhanai Saram’

(Comment: Please note there has been an important progression here. Ramana through Michael and Sadhu Om state there is a first enlightenment which happens when the I-thought, the ego is seen through, and with the disappearance of the ego, one experiences the great Void, a sense of immense space the interpenetrates and contains all the world. The Void is part and parcel of the Oneness state; it is the space that interpenetrates and also contains all phenomena, from external sensations and apparent objects, to all the inner phenomena.

Then one “gets” the knowledge that he or she is not the Void, the void is just another witnessed object or second or third person.

Then one “apprehends” that he or she (by this time neither), are universal consciousness without any identity to anything in the world.

Then one apprehends one is even beyond both the universal consciousness and individual consciousness altogether.

However, then you have to take one more step of maintaining your identity as impersonal universal consciousness even while descending in or coming out of the sleep state. This has to be practiced. Why?

With the “apprehension” that you exist always, in all states, even though before you thought you did not, it is an easy leap to see that you exist entirely separate from the body/mind/sleep and even Turiya. In a sense, you apprehend your” beyondness,” and with that comes absolute freedom and great courage.

By greater and more steadfast practice of abiding in this existence-consciousness, we will experience that this state seems to come often and take possession of us of its own accord whenever we are free from our daily work. But, since this state of existence-consciousness is in fact nothing but 'we' (universal), it is wrong to think that such a state comes and takes possession of us! While at work, we attend to other things; after that work is over and before we attend to some other second or third person, we naturally abide in our real state, existence-consciousness. Though this happens to one and all every day, it is only to those who have the experience of Self-consciousness through the aforesaid practice that the state of Self-abidance will be clearly discerned after leaving one second person thought and before catching another one (that is, between two thoughts).

“Why has it been said (in the above two verses of ‘Sadhana Saram’) that one ought to make effort repeatedly to be in that state (our existence-consciousness) and ought to abide in it with more and more love? Because, until all the tendencies (vasanas) which drive one out of it are completely exhausted, this state will seem to come and go⁷⁵. Hence the need for continued effort and love to abide in Self.”

“When, through this practice, our state of existence consciousness is experienced always as inescapably natural, then there will be no harm even if waking, dream and sleep pass across,”

“For those who are well established in the unending Self-consciousness, which pervades and transcends all these three so-called states (waking, dream and sleep), there is but one state, the Whole, the All, and that alone is real! This state, which is devoid even of the feeling ‘I am making effort’, is your natural state of being! Be!!”

(Comment: Such advice and understanding is not found among any of the neo-advaitins who think that loss of the ego, the entering and maintaining unity consciousness in the waking state is the beginning and end of spirituality. If you believe them, you will be stuck on the first step.)

Michael and Sadhu Om then spend many pages discussing Ramana’s understanding of the relationship between consciousness and the body. Remember too, Nisargadatta says consciousness only exists with the body, including universal consciousness. However, I will stop here as the point I wanted to make was that Ramana advised rather intense practice which culminated in becoming the Void, then transcending the Void, then penetrating through the ignorance of the causal body by watching the arising and setting of I consciousness.)

05 JANUARY 2010

For some times I have watched many Facebook people trading “verbal” pointers with each other and receiving applauding comments from readers. The quotes and comments are usually about thoughts vis-a-vis appearances of the world, experience as the desiderata of truth, identification with thinking or the body, the impermanence of thought, the deconstruction of the mind, and also about the cognizing and existence.

But all of this is on a superficial level of concepts about mind and reality. It is mind speaking to mind, engaging intellectual analysis of concepts and phenomena.

In fact, no deep understanding or attainment can come from this, because the mind itself is false and consciousness is not real in any ultimate sense.

All the great teachers, Ramana Maharshi, Nisargadatta Maharaj, and Robert Adams place extraordinary emphasis on self-inquiry, which also seems often confused with the repetitious use of the query, “Who am I?,” repeated endlessly with respect to thoughts and emotions and percepts.

However, this is not self-inquiry. Self inquiry means isolating the sense of I Am, the sense that we exist, the sense of amness, or the sense of I, focus on it, probe it with the mind, and learn every aspect of its nature. By such familiarity we gain an understanding of the experience of I Am, which gradually has to be teased away from the experience of the body and world, which is a false appearance. We must experience I Am, the first person, as ourself, completely without the distortion of the world and body presence, the projected waking world. That is how the personal

mind is dissolved, by seeing through the falseness of the world consciousness, the waking mind, the body and dreamworld, not by intellectual analysis of the relation between thoughts and objects, neither of which have “real” existence.

This inward investigation and abiding in the sense of I Am leads to an automatic relinquishing of the world, and an automatic, downwards spiraling into one’s true self nature. The deeper you go, the happier you become, making it easier it is to go deeper because of the increasing happiness and love felt. There is a growing love to abide silently in one’s self and not turn outside. You become increasingly happy doing nothing but attending to your own subjectivity. This takes the mind deeper and makes it more subtle, seeing distinctions missing before.

But absolutely nothing is to be gained by observing thoughts, except the I thought, or understanding intellectually how thoughts create the false world we observe. This is only philosophizing. Western philosophy dealt with these topics for hundreds of years as do Eastern philosophers still, with no freedom found in such mental gymnastics.

When you go deep into the experience of I Am, at some point the illusion of the world—waking consciousness AND dream mind becomes crystal clear. They are both seen strictly as imagination, and the desire arises to know the real. No analysis is needed or helpful in finding the real, only plunging deeper within.

Therefore the emphasis should be on doing self inquiry in the proper way and sharing with others one’s experience while going deeper into the contents of consciousness. You have to go deep into the mind, to the root of you beingness in order to transcend it, and that is done by following, attending to, or abiding in that sense of I Am.

Self inquiry allows the mind to gradually become sharper and more subtle, so that it can tease out reality from unreality, appearance from the self.

I have universally recommended several texts for this: The meditation manual, “The Nisargadatta Gita” by Apte, and The Path of Sri Ramana, Part I, chapters 7 and 8 by Sadhu Om and Michael James. Then again, all of Robert’s talks, the 146 available now of <http://itisnotreal.com>, all emphasize self inquiry. Robert talks about the various methods of self-inquiry in many different ways in his talks. He never advised doing nothing. Except perhaps being near him.

Michael James wrote a huge 672 page book covering all aspects of Ramana’s teachings entitled “Happiness and the Art of Being” which goes deeply into Ramana’s teachings and the practice of self-inquiry. It is important to read this message on reality (Chapter 4) and Practice, Chapter 10.

I really don’t understand the function of throwing “pointer” quotes at each rather than talking about your own experiences in self-inquiry. That would do far more to help others than quotes from someone who deconstructs the mind, or analyzes percepts and thoughts.

Nisargadatta Gita Download: <http://www.lulu.com/product/download/the-nisargadatta-gita/3744368>

Path of Sri Ramana Part I

http://www.happinessofbeing.com/The_Path_of_Sri_Ramana_Part_One.pdf

Robert Adams

Transcripts: http://itisnotreal.com/Collected_Works_of_Robert_Adams_Vol_1.pdf

Michael James: Happiness and the Art of

Being: http://www.happinessofbeing.com/happiness_art_being.html#ebook

I would also point out that [Michael Langford's book](#), follows in this same tradition of emphasizing constant self-attention, although the practice described is slightly different from the methods espoused in the books above.

Until you know first hand that which lies beyond waking and dream world consciousness, you cannot be sure that your existence is constant, and that YOU are beyond heaven and earth, and life and death.

Then when you see thus deeply into yourself, you will feel the deepest happiness and love imaginable.

The point is avoid talking about thought, concepts, reality, witness, observer, real, unreal, etc., and look within for your source as I Amness, and abide there. This is your sense of existence, or presence. Watch it, play with it, recede into it, abide in it. Then everything will be revealed.

From Michael James book, my own "pointers" quote:

If we are really intent upon experiencing the true goal of yoga, which is perfectly clear self-knowledge, we will not feel inclined to read vast quantities of sacred texts or other philosophical books, because we will be eager to put into practice what we have learnt from a few really pertinent books which explain that simple self-attentive being is the only means by which we can experience that goal. If instead we feel enthusiasm only to study an endless number of books, we will merely succeed in filling our mind with countless thoughts, which will draw our attention away from our essential consciousness of our own being. Thus filling our mind with knowledge gathered from many books will be a great obstacle to our practice of self-attentive being.

Excessive study will not only fill our mind with innumerable thoughts, which will cloud our natural inner clarity of self-consciousness, but will also fill it with the pride of learning, which will prompt us to display our vast knowledge to other people, and to expect them to appreciate and praise it. Therefore in verse 36 of Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham Sri Ramana says:

Rather than people who though learned, have not subsided [surrendered or become humble or still], the unlearned are saved. They are saved from the ghost of pride that possesses the learned. They are saved from the disease of many whirling thoughts. They are saved from running in search of fame [repute, respect, esteem or glory]. Know that what they are saved from is not just one evil.

Of all the obstacles that can arise in our path when we are seeking true self-knowledge, the desire for praise, appreciation, respect, high regard, renown or fame is one of the most delusive and therefore dangerous, and it is one to which the learned are particularly susceptible. Therefore in verse 37 of Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham Sri Ramana says:

Though all the worlds are [regarded by them as] straw, and though all the sacred texts are within [their] hand, [for] people who come under the sway of the wicked whore who is puhazhchi [praise, applause, appreciation, respect, high regard, renown or fame], escaping [their] slavery [to her], is rare.

The first clause of this verse, ‘though all the worlds are straw’, implies that those of us who have studied vast amounts of philosophy may look down upon the normal mundane pleasures of this world, heaven and all other worlds as being a mere trifle, and may therefore imagine that we have renounced all desire for them. The second clause, ‘though all the sacred texts are within hand’, implies that we may have mastered a vast range of scholastic knowledge about various systems of philosophy, religious belief and other such subjects. However, in spite of all our vast learning and our seeming renunciation, if we fall prey to desire for the extremely delusive pleasure of being an object of praise, appreciation, admiration, respect, high regard, acclaim or fame, to free oneself of such desire is very difficult indeed.

The desire for appreciation and respect is very subtle and therefore powerful in its ability to delude us, and it is a desire to which even otherwise perfectly good people can easily fall a prey, particularly if they engage themselves in any activity that seems to benefit other people, such as teaching the principles of religion, philosophy or moral conduct through either speech or writing. This desire is particularly dangerous for a spiritual aspirant, because the pleasure we feel in being appreciated and respected derives from our attachment to our ego or individual personality – our delusive sense that we are the person who is appreciated and respected.

12 JULY 2010

A lot of people write me about their experiences. But experiences come and go.

When experiences stop coming and going, that is when you are going somewhere.

When first you begin to practice hard, kundalini experiences come and go. Sometimes oneness experiences come and go. All kinds of physical experiences come and go. All sorts of insights come and go.

The coming and going means the experiences are impermanent and mostly irrelevant, and the understandings will be superseded weeks or months later.

Also, when the experiences come and go, people get impatient thinking the harder they practice, or if they practice a different technique, some final experiences will come and not go, or some final insights will come and not go.

But nothing in the mind or consciousness is permanent. It all comes and goes. It is all temporary.

What happens though is when you realize all experiences and understandings come and go, you just step back and watch the coming and going, totally relaxed, as a witness. Then samadhis come and go. Bliss comes and stays a while and goes. Happiness permeates your life. Sitting and meditation become effortless, and you know deep in your being that all flows from you, yet still is not you.

You realize you are still separate from these experiences, even when they feel identical to you.

You see, there is no final state to realize. No final understanding to finalize. Instead, you step back and see many things. Consciousness is you, but that consciousness is the same in everyone, from firefly to human. You also understand that consciousness is not you, it is a show happening to you but is not you.

You become one with the totality of manifest consciousness, then you become aware of

nothingness and realize even the void is not you.

You become like a mountain with all happening around you, the sun rising and setting, people crawling on you, rain wearing away your granite robes, but you are removed and unmoved.

This is when you know you have begun to make real progress. When you sit in meditation you feel large, all encompassing, like a mountain, and when you are not meditating, you are calm like a moon filled cold night where nothing moves.

The easiest way to get here is strong sitting meditation, like Shikantaza with a Zen master at a mountain retreat, or sitting with a great teacher in satsang at an ashram. Group sitting build power more quickly than alone sitting, and formal sitting in padmaasana is far, far more powerful than sitting alone in a chair or couch, or lying on the floor.

Rajiv is thinking of starting an ashram, or at least sitting meditation sessions in Mumbai. Join him if you are in India. Sergio may be ready to teach within a year also in Italy. These are real Advaitins, not the neos who rule the day now.

22 JULY 2010

MY CONFESSION:

When we were around Robert, no one wanted to work. We were surrounded by his peace and after leaving him from lunch or Satsang, it was the hardest thing to return to the world. The deeper the message gets and the deeper meditation gets, the more silence envelopes you and the more peace and bliss you feel. In fact, you might get quite crabby with people who want you to do something, like a wife or husband who wants you to pay attention to them.

To understand this state, which certainly is not the "final" state, you have to read the Ashtavakra Gita by Byrom, portions of which are found on the [itisnotreal.com website](http://itisnotreal.com).

After learning how to rest in I Amness, A.K.A. Turiya, oneness, complete happiness, etc., it is really difficult to initiate activities. When activities come, they are not initiated by you, but from "outside." Someone needs help, someone knocks at the door, someone sends you a bill, or you see some injustice that needs fixing. Then briefly you can become like a tiger if needed.

No one is lazier than someone who can become lost in the Self, awareness, oneness, peace. There is no desire at all to do anything and if action comes, it arises spontaneously out of the moment.

The older I get, the less I understand complex issues. Years ago I would have been absorbed in discussions, especially mathematics or philosophy, because I had a mind that wanted to understand things. Now someone starts talking to me about mechanical, medical or website design issues, and it passes right over my head. I just smile as if I understood, or as if I cared, because I don't want them repeating it to explain it better. They might as well have been talking to a tree trunk.

Everything comes and goes, moment by moment all day long, but I no longer move. I rest in happiness and peace as dumb as a rock, yet peaceful and all pervading. My mind is calm, still, concepts just ruffle the surface, to be ignored. This is peace.

This is why I do not have Satsang. I have no need for it and am too lazy and happy to start one. I have done it before and know the energy it takes and how distracting it is, nor does there appear to be a great need for it in L.A. If there were a great need, things would happen to make Satsang happen.

Robert never had Satsang at his house, but always at devotee's houses. Robert was driven too and from Satsang. Robert couldn't even dress himself properly and needed Nicole Adams to help

him. Robert was my ideal. He did nothing and preached doing nothing, always dwelling on the edge of the Void.

We all learned that lesson well and few of us could even work. Robert used to joke to his close students that he was the only one working by doing Satsang.

Many of you write about how is one able to do an active life and strong sadhana at the same time. My advice has always been to give up the active life. But there are those who lead active lives and are realized. However, Robert's way of doing nothing chose me.



The state just prior to becoming dumb as a rock.



Truly dumb as a rock but happy!

24 July 2010

About every other Satsang, Robert would tell us, "Your mind is not your friend."

Often he'd stop in the middle of a talk and just say "Stop thinking" as loudly as he could, two or three times. But he couldn't speak very loudly due to Parkinson's.

Seung Sahn Soen Sa used to tell me all the time, "You must become very, dumb, dumb as a brick." He would also say, "Go straight ahead," meaning don't constantly try to figure things out with your mind even including the correct practice.

In Sesshin at Mt. Baldy you do not speak for seven days except to Roshi or when given work instructions. Everything is silence.

But so many of you who read this are trying to figure things out with your mind. You ask what is the best practice? Am I doing this right? What about what Ramana said one time? Nisargadatta said xxxxx at one time, what do you think about that?

Your mind is always stopping you from getting deeper than mind. You are deeper than your mind and even deeper than consciousness, but until you stop following the lead of your mind, you will never get below mind, you will never find freedom.

So stop thinking. Just get hold of the Nisargadatta Gita, download it, print it out and read it every morning and evening. Then sit and ponder the meaning. Then sit as strongly as possible, find the I Am feeling, and dwell in it, abide in it, immerse your attention in it. If you do it strongly and continuously, in a very short time you will begin to feel happy, and all your questions will begin to go away.

Just go straight ahead with that practice.

It is a matter of persistence and focus.

All the experiences you have along the way are irrelevant, meaningless distractions. Just follow the deepening peace, the deepening I Am until the I Am disappears.

At this point you are where Rajiv was near the middle of Autobiography of a Jnani. This is when "self-discovery" becomes really, really interesting. But until you reach this point, just follow the I Am. Stop checking to see if you are making progress by comparing what I or anyone said about anyone's understanding or progress.

It is all up to you, your focus, your dedication, your persistence, and not getting distracted.

Go straight ahead, become dumb as a rock. Stop thinking! Just meditate on finding your sense of self.