

Nonduality Salon Presents

ASMI

Excerpts from Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj's *I AM THAT*

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The big cycle: part two

The return to the Absolute.

There is the body and there is the Self. Between them is the mind, in which the Self is reflected as "I am". Because of the imperfections of the mind, its crudity and restlessness, lack of discernment and insight, it takes itself to be the body, not the Self. All that is needed is to purify the mind so that it can realize its identity with the Self. When the mind merges in the Self, the body presents no problems. It remains what it is, an instrument of cognition and action, the tool and the expression of the creative fire within. The ultimate value of the body is that it serves to discover the cosmic body, which is the universe in its entirety. As you realize yourself in manifestation, you keep on discovering that you are ever more than what you have imagined. (274)

Consciousness as such is the subtle counterpart of matter. Just as inertia (tamas) and energy (rajas) are attributes of matter, so does harmony (sattva) manifest itself as consciousness. You may consider it in a way as a form of very subtle energy. Wherever matter organizes itself into a stable organism, consciousness appears spontaneously. With the destruction of the organism, consciousness disappears. (265)

The mind produces thoughts ceaselessly, even when you do not look at them. When you know what is going on in your mind, you call it consciousness. This is your waking state - your consciousness shifts from sensation to sensation, from perception to perception, from idea to idea, in endless succession. Then comes awareness, the direct insight into the whole of consciousness, the totality of the mind. The mind is like a river, flowing ceaselessly in the bed of the body; you

identify yourself for a moment with some particular ripple and call it "my thought". All you are conscious of is your mind; awareness is the cognizance of consciousness as a whole. (221)

Consciousness comes and goes, awareness shines immutably. When there is a person, there is also consciousness. "I am", mind, consciousness denote the same state. If you say "I am aware", it only means "I am conscious of thinking about being aware". There is no "I am" in awareness. Witnessing is of the mind. The witness goes with the witnessed. In the state of non-duality, all separation ceases. (488)

It [the witness] is both [real and unreal]. The last remnant of illusion, the first touch of the real. To say: "I am only the witness" is both false and true: false because of the "I am", true because of the witness. It is better to say "there is witnessing". The moment you say "I am", the entire universe comes into being along with its creator. (362)

The witness is merely a point in awareness. It has no name and form. It is like the reflection of the sun in a drop of dew. The drop of dew has name and form, but the little point of light is caused by the sun. (399)

Watch yourself closely and you will see that whatever be the content of consciousness, the witnessing of it does not depend on the content. Awareness is itself and does not change with the event. The event may be pleasant or unpleasant, minor or important, awareness is the same. Take note of the peculiar nature of pure awareness, its natural self-identity, without the least trace of self-consciousness, and go to the root of it and you will soon realize that awareness is your true nature, and nothing you may be aware of, you can call your own. When the content is viewed without likes and dislikes, the consciousness of it is awareness. But still there is a difference between awareness as reflected in consciousness and pure awareness beyond consciousness. Reflected awareness, the sense "I am aware" is the witness, while pure awareness is the essence of reality. Reflection of the sun in a drop of water is a reflection of the sun, no doubt, but not the sun itself. Between awareness reflected in consciousness as the witness and pure awareness there is a gap, which the mind cannot cross. (437-8) Consciousness does not shine by itself. It shines by a light beyond it in which it appears, which gives it being. Don't be all the time immersed in your experience. Remember that you are

beyond the experiencer, ever unborn and deathless. In remembering it, the quality of pure knowledge will emerge, the light of unconditional awareness. (190)

By its very nature, the mind is outward turned; it always tends to seek for the source of things among the things themselves; to be told to look for the source within, is, in a way, the beginning of a new life. Awareness takes the place of consciousness; in consciousness there is the "I", who is conscious, while awareness is undivided; awareness is aware of itself. The "I am" is a thought, while awareness is not a thought; there is no "I am aware" in awareness. Consciousness is an attribute while awareness is not; one can be aware of being conscious, but not conscious of awareness. God is the totality of consciousness, but awareness is beyond all - being as well as not-being. (263)

The totality of conscious experience is nature. As a conscious self you are a part of nature. As awareness, you are beyond. Seeing nature as mere consciousness is awareness. There are levels in consciousness, but not in awareness. It is of one block, homogeneous. Its reflection in the mind is love and understanding. There are levels of clarity in understanding and intensity in love, but not in their source. The source is simple and single, but its gifts are infinite. Only do not take the gifts for the source. Realize yourself as the source and not as the river, that is all. Of course, you are [the river too]. As an "I am" you are the river, flowing between the banks of the body. But you are also the source and the ocean and the clouds in the sky. Wherever there is life and consciousness, you are. Smaller than the smallest, bigger than the biggest, you are, while all else appears. (403)

Awareness is primordial; it is the original state, beginningless, endless, uncaused, unsupported, without parts, without change. Consciousness is on contact, a reflection against a surface, a state of duality. There can be no consciousness without awareness, but there can be awareness without consciousness, as in deep sleep. Awareness is absolute, consciousness is relative to its content; consciousness is always of something. Consciousness is partial and changeful, awareness is total, changeless, calm and silent. And it is the common matrix of every experience. Since it is awareness that makes consciousness possible, there is awareness in every state of consciousness. Therefore, the very consciousness of being conscious is already a movement in awareness. Interest in your

stream of consciousness takes you to awareness. It is not a new state. It is at once recognized as the original, basic experience, which is life itself, and also love and joy. (29)

Awareness with an object we call witnessing. When there is also self-identification with the object, caused by desire or fear, such a state is called a person. In reality there is only one state; when distorted by self-identification it is called a person, when coloured with the sense of being, it is the witness; when colourless and limitless, it is called the Supreme. (401)

One word may convey several and even contradictory meanings. The "I am" that pursues the pleasant and shuns the unpleasant is false; the "I am" that sees pleasure and pain as inseparable sees rightly. The witness that is enmeshed in what he perceives is the person; the witness who stands aloof, unmoved and untouched is the watch-tower of the real, the point at which awareness, inherent in the unmanifested, contacts the manifested. (351)

The "I am" in movement creates the world. The "I am" at peace becomes the Absolute. Of course you can [change the world you project]. But you must cease identifying yourself with it and go beyond. Then you have the power to destroy and re-create. (351)

As long as you are ignorant of yourself as the creator, your world is limited and repetitive. Once you go beyond your self-identification with your past, you are free to create a new world of harmony and beauty. Or you just remain, beyond being and non-being. (389)

The world has only as much power over you as you give it. Rebel. Go beyond duality. (351)

The person merges into the witness, the witness into awareness, awareness into pure being, yet identity is not lost, only its limitations are lost. It is transfigured and becomes the real Self, the sadguru, the eternal friend and guide. (447)

When I look through the mind, I see numberless people. When I look beyond the mind, I see the witness. Beyond the witness there is the infinite intensity of emptiness and silence. (355)

Without the one [the witness] the other [the "I am"] cannot be. Yet they are not one. It is like the flower and its colour.

Without flower, no colours; without colour, the flower remains unseen. Beyond is the light which on contact with the flower creates the colour. Realize that your true nature is that of pure light only, and both the perceived and the perceiver come and go together. That which makes both possible, and yet is neither, is your real being, which means not being a "this" or "that", but pure awareness of being and not-being. When awareness is turned on itself, the feeling is of not knowing. When it is turned outward, the knowables come into being. To say "I know myself" is a contradiction in terms for what is "known" cannot be "myself". (395)

There must be love in the relation between the person who says "I am" and the observer of that "I am". As long as the observer, the inner self, the higher self, considers himself apart from the observed, the lower self, despises it and condemns it, the situation is hopeless. It is only when the observer (vyakta) accepts the person (vyakti) as a projection or manifestation of himself and, so to say, takes the self into the Self, the duality of "I" and "this" goes, and in the identity of the outer and the inner the Supreme Reality manifests itself. This union of the seer and the seen happens when the seer becomes conscious of himself as the seer; he is not merely interested in the seen, which he is anyhow, but also interested in being interested, giving attention to attention, aware of being aware. Affectionate awareness is the crucial factor that brings Reality into focus. When the vyakti realizes its non-existence in separation from the vyakta, and the vyakta sees the vyakti as his own expression, then the peace and silence of the avyakta state come into being. In reality the three are one: the vyakta and the avyakta are inseparable, while the vyakti is the sensing-feeling-thinking process. (292-3)

[Between vyakta and avyakta] there is no difference. It is like light and daylight. The universe is full of light which you do not see; but the same light you see as daylight. And what the daylight reveals is the vyakti. (251)

The state of identity is inherent in reality and never fades. But identity is neither the transient personality (vyakti), nor the karma-bound individuality (vyakta). It is what remains when all self-identification is given up as false - pure consciousness, the sense of being all there is, or could be. Consciousness is pure in the beginning and pure in the end; in between it gets contaminated by imagination which is at the root of creation. At all times consciousness remains the same. To know it as it

is, is realization and timeless peace. (395)

Beyond the self (vyakta), lies the unmanifested (avyakta), the causeless cause of everything. (143)

All happens in consciousness and you are the root, the source, the foundation of consciousness. The world is but a succession of experiences and you are what makes them conscious, and yet remain beyond all experience. It is like the heat, the flame and the burning wood. The heat maintains the flame, the flame consumes the wood. Without heat there would be neither flame nor fuel. Similarly, without awareness there would be no consciousness, nor life, which transforms matter into a vehicle of consciousness. (404)

What relationship can there be between what is and what merely appears to be? Is there any relationship between the ocean and its waves? The real enables the unreal to appear and causes it to disappear. The succession of transient moments creates the illusion of time, but the timeless reality of pure being is not in movement, for all movement requires a motionless background. It is itself the background. Once you have found it in yourself, you know that you had never lost that independent being, independent of all divisions and separations. But don't look for it in consciousness, you will not find it there. Don't look for it anywhere, for nothing contains it. On the contrary, it contains everything and manifests everything. It is like the daylight that makes everything visible while itself remaining invisible. (410)

The seeker is he who is in search of himself. Soon he discovers that his own body he cannot be. Once the conviction "I am not the body" becomes so well grounded that he can no longer feel, think and act for and behalf of the body, he will easily discover that he is the universal being, knowing, acting; that in him and through him the entire universe is real, conscious and alive. This is the heart of the problem. Either you are body-conscious and a slave of circumstances, or you are the universal consciousness itself - and in full control of every event. Yet consciousness, individual or universal, is not my true abode; I am not in it, it is not mine, there is no "me" in it. I am beyond, though it is not easy to explain how one can be neither conscious nor unconscious, but just beyond. I cannot say that I am in God or I am God; God is the universal light and love, the universal witness: I am beyond the universal even. (320)

Ultimately you will come to see that you are neither the particular nor the universal, you are beyond both. As the tiny point of a pencil can draw innumerable pictures, so does the dimensionless point of awareness draw the contents of the vast universe. Find that point and be free. (389)

The enlightened (gnani) is neither [conscious or unconscious]. But in his enlightenment (gnana) all is contained. Awareness contains every experience. But he who is aware is beyond every experience. He is beyond awareness itself. (265)

There can be no experience beyond consciousness. Yet there is the experience of just being. There is a state beyond consciousness, which is not unconscious. Some call it super-consciousness, or pure consciousness, or supreme consciousness. It is pure awareness free from the subject-object nexus. Consciousness is intermittent, full of gaps. Yet there is the continuity of identity. What is this sense of identity due to, if not to something beyond consciousness? (310)

To take appearance for reality is a grievous sin and the cause of all calamities. You are the all-pervading, eternal and infinitely creative awareness -consciousness. All else is local and temporary. (42)

Creation - reflection - rejection: Brahma - Vishnu - Shiva : this is the eternal process. All things are governed by it. After the stage of creation, comes the stage of examination and reflection, and finally the stage of abandonment and forgetting. The consciousness remains, but in a latent, quiet state. Understand that the One includes the Three and that you are the One, and you shall be free of the world process. (394)

There are no real differences. Only the One is real.

There is the body. Inside the body appears to be an observer, and outside a world under observation. The observer and his observation as well as the world observed appear and disappear together. Beyond it all, there is void. This void is one for all. (378)

The knower comes and goes with the known, and is transient; but that which knows that it does not know, which is free of memory and anticipation, is timeless. (395)

The known is but a shape and knowledge is but a name. The knower is but a state of mind. The real is beyond. All knowledge is in memory; it is only recognition, while reality is beyond the duality of the knower and the known. How misleading is your language! You assume, unconsciously, that reality also is approachable through knowledge. And then you bring in a knower of reality beyond reality! Do understand that to be, reality need not be known. Ignorance and knowledge are in the mind, not in the real. (423)

To become free, your attention must be drawn to the "I am", the witness. Of course, the knower and the known are one, not two, but to break the spell of the known the knower must be brought to the forefront. Neither is primary, both are reflections in memory of the ineffable experience, ever new and ever now, untranslatable, quicker than the mind. (424)

They [the person and the witness] appear to be two, but on investigation they are found to be one. Duality lasts as long as it is not questioned. The trinity: mind, self, spirit (vyakti, vyakta, avyanta) , when looked into, becomes unity. These are only modes of experiencing: of attachment, of detachment, of transcendence. (363)

They [matter and spirit] are one, or two, or three. On investigation, three become two, and two become one. Take the simile of face - mirror - image. Any two of them presuppose the third which unites the two. In sadhana, you see the three as two, until you realize the two as one. (479)

You are really in search of yourself, without knowing it. You are love-longing for the love-worthy, the perfect lovable. Due to ignorance you are looking for it in the world of opposites and contradictions. When you find it within, your search will be over. (401)

Pain and pleasure, good and bad, right and wrong: these are relative terms and must not be taken absolutely. They are limited and temporary. (264)

What you see is yours, and what I see is mine. The two have little in common. To find the common factor you must abandon all distinctions. Only the universal is in common. (533)

When you look at anything, it is the ultimate you see, but you imagine that you see a cloud or a tree. (201)

We love variety, the play of pain and pleasure, we are fascinated by contrasts. For this we need the opposites and their apparent separation. We enjoy them for a time and then get tired and crave for the peace and silence of pure being. (416)

My world is free from opposites, of mutually destructive discrepancies; harmony pervades; its peace is rocklike; this peace and silence are my body. (485)

In the mirror of your mind, images appear and disappear. The mirror remains. Learn to distinguish the immovable in the movable, the unchanging in the changing, till you realize that all differences are in appearance only, and oneness is a fact. This basic identity -you may call God, or Brahman, or the matrix (Prakriti) , the words matter little- is only the realization that all is one. Once you can say with confidence born from direct experience "I am the world, the world is myself", you are free from desire and fear on one hand and become totally responsible for the world on the other. The senseless sorrow of mankind becomes your sole concern. (496)
A man who knows that he is neither body nor mind cannot be selfish, for he has nothing to be selfish for. Or you may say he is equally "selfish" on behalf of everybody he meets; everybody's welfare is his own. The feeling "I am the world, the world is myself" becomes quite natural; once it is established, there is just no way of being selfish. To be selfish means to covet, acquire, accumulate on behalf of the part against the whole. (510-1)

I have no shape, nor name. It is attachment to a name and shape that breeds fear. I am not attached. I am nothing, and nothing is afraid of no thing. On the contrary, everything is afraid of Nothing, for when a thing touches Nothing, it becomes nothing. (88)

Reality is neither subjective nor objective, neither mind nor matter, neither time nor space. These divisions need somebody to whom to happen, a conscious separate centre. But reality is all and nothing, the totality and the exclusion, the fullness and the emptiness, fully consistent, absolutely paradoxical. You cannot speak about it, you can only lose your self in it. When you deny reality to anything, you come to a residue which

cannot be denied. (208)

No relation [between Reality and its expressions]. In Reality, all is real and identical. As we put it, saguna and nirguna are one in Parabrahman. There is only the Supreme. In movement, it is saguna. Motionless, it is nirguna. But it is only the mind that moves or does not move. The real is beyond, you are beyond. (489)

Unmanifested, manifested, individuality, personality (nirguna, saguna, vyakta, व्यक्ति), all these are mere words, points of view, mental attitudes. There is no reality in them. The real is experienced in silence. (89)

In reality the three are one: the vyakta and the avyakta are inseparable, while the व्यक्ति is the sensing-feeling-thinking process. How can there be relation when they are one? All talk of separation and relation is due to the distorting and corrupting influence of "I-am-the-body" idea. The outer self (व्यक्ति) is merely a projection on the body-mind of the inner self (vyakta) , which again is only an expression of the Supreme Self (avyakta) , which is all and none. (293)

All attributes are personal. The real is beyond all attributes. (528)

As water remains water regardless of the vessels, as light remains itself regardless of the colours it brings out, so does the real remain real regardless of conditions in which it is reflected. (15)

If I ask you what is the taste of your mouth, all you can do is to say: it is neither sweet nor bitter, nor sour nor astringent; it is what remains when all these tastes are not. Similarly, when all distinctions and reactions are no more, what remains is reality, simple and solid. (410)

When all names and forms have been given up, the real is with you. You need not seek it. Plurality and diversity are the play of the mind only. Reality is one. (38)

In reality there is only the source, dark in itself, making everything shine. Unperceived, it causes perception. Unfelt, it causes feeling. Unthinkable, it causes thought. Non-being, it gives birth to being. It is the immovable background of motion. Once you are there, you are at home everywhere.

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