

Nonduality Salon Presents

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

compiled and edited by [Miguel-Angel Carrasco](#)

Numbers after quotations refer to pages of the edition by Chetana (P) Ltd, Bombay, 1992.

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The Way to Self-Realization: Part Four

*See that happiness is not pleasure.
See that desires and fears create bondage.
And be free and happy through detachment.*

See that happiness is not pleasure.

Pain and pleasure are the crests and valleys in the ocean of bliss (ananda). Deep down there is utter fullness. (165)

Pain and pleasure go always together. Freedom from one means freedom from the both. If you do not care for pleasure, you will not be afraid of pain. But there is happiness, which is neither, which is completely beyond. (145)

My experience is that everything is bliss. But the desire for bliss creates pain. Thus bliss becomes the seed of pain. The entire universe of pain is born of desire. Give up the desire for pleasure and you will not even know what is pain. (82)

The right state and use of the body and the mind are intensely pleasant. It is the search for pleasure that is wrong. (468)

When the mind is engaged in serving the body, happiness is lost. To regain it, it seeks pleasure. The urge to be happy is right, but the means of securing it are misleading, unreliable and destructive of true happiness. (468)

Do not try to make yourself happy, rather question your very search for happiness. It is because you are not happy that you want to be happy. Find out why you are unhappy. Because you

are not happy you seek happiness in pleasure; pleasure brings in pain and therefore you call it worldly; you then long for some other pleasure, without pain, which you call divine. In reality, pleasure is but a respite from pain. (468)

The very desire to live is the messenger of death, as the longing to be happy is the outline of sorrow. The world is an ocean of pain and fear, of anxiety and despair. Pleasures are like the fishes, few and swift, rarely come, quickly gone. A man of low intelligence believes, against all evidence, that he is an exception and that the world owes him happiness. But the world cannot give what it does not have; unreal to the core, it is of no use for real happiness. It cannot be otherwise. We seek the real because we are unhappy with the unreal. Happiness is our real nature and we shall never rest until we find it. (485-6)

Momentary relief from pain we call pleasure - and we build castles in the air hoping for endless pleasure which we call happiness. It is all misunderstanding. (145)

You are like a child with a lollypop in its mouth. You may feel happy for a moment by being totally self-centered, but it is enough to have a good look at human faces to perceive the universality of suffering. Even your own happiness is so vulnerable and short-lived, at the mercy of a bank-crash, or a stomach ulcer. It is just a moment of respite, a mere gap between two sorrows. Real happiness is not vulnerable, because it does not depend on circumstances. (472-3)

Pleasure depends on things, happiness does not. As long as we believe that we need things to make us happy, we shall also believe that in their absence we must be miserable. Mind always shapes itself according to its beliefs. Hence the importance of convincing oneself that one need not be prodded into happiness; that, on the contrary, pleasure is a distraction and a nuisance, for it merely increases the false conviction that one needs to have and do things to be happy, when in reality it is just the opposite. But why talk of happiness at all? You do not think of happiness except when you are unhappy. A man who says "Now I am happy" is between two sorrows, past and future. This happiness is mere excitement caused by relief from pain. Real happiness is utterly unselfconscious. It is best expressed negatively as: "there is nothing wrong with me, I have nothing to worry about". (486-7)

Once you have grasped the truth that the world is full of

suffering, that to be born is a calamity, you will find the urge and the energy to go beyond. Pleasure puts you to sleep and pain wakes you up. If you do not want to suffer, don't go to sleep. You cannot know yourself through bliss alone, for bliss is your very nature. You must face the opposite, what you are not, to find enlightenment. (306)

See that desires and fears create bondage.

As you think yourself to be, so you think the world to be. If you imagine yourself as separate from the world, the world will appear as separate from you and you will experience desire and fear. I do not see the world as separate from me and so there is nothing for me to desire or fear. (123)

Selfishness is the cause of suffering. There is no other cause. It is only with separateness and self-seeking that real suffering appears in the world. (474)

Self-identification with the body creates ever fresh desires, and there is no end to them, unless this mechanism of bondage is clearly seen. It is clarity that is liberating, for you cannot abandon desire unless its causes and effects are clearly seen. (381)

When desire and fear end, bondage also ends. It is the emotional involvement, the pattern of likes and dislikes which we call character and temperament, that create the bondage. Don't be afraid of freedom from desire and fear. It enables you to live a life so different from all you know, so much more intense and interesting, that truly by losing all you gain all. (505)

To act from desire and fear is bondage, to act from love is freedom. (489)

In Hinduism, the very idea of free will is non-existent, so there is no word for it. Will is commitment, fixation, bondage. (356)

All desires are bad, but some are worse than others. Pursue any desire, it will always give you trouble. Why desire at all? Desiring a state of freedom from desire will not set you free. Nothing can set you free, because you are free. See yourself with desireless clarity, that is all. (69)

Freedom from all desire is eternity. All attachment implies

fear, for all things are transient. And fear makes one a slave. This freedom from attachment does not come with practice; it is natural, when one knows one's true being. Self-knowledge is detachment. All craving is due to a sense of insufficiency. When you know that you lack nothing, that all there is, is you and yours, desire ceases. (259)

The obstacles to clear perception of one's true being are desire for pleasure and fear of pain. It is the pleasure-pain motivation that stands in the way. The very freedom from all motivation, the state in which no desire arises, is the natural state. (144)

All desires must be given up, because by desiring you take the shape of your desires. When no desires remain, you revert to your natural state. (336)

[One reaches the Supreme state] by renouncing all lesser desires. As long as you are pleased with the lesser, you cannot have the highest. Whatever pleases you keeps you back. Until you realize the unsatisfactoriness of everything, its transiency and limitation, and collect your energies in one great longing, ever the first step is not made. On the other hand, the integrity of the desire for the Supreme is by itself a call from the Supreme. Nothing, physical or mental, can give you freedom. You are free once you understand that your bondage is of your own making and cease forging the chains that bind you. (304)

Be free and happy through detachment.

Stay without ambition, without the least desire, exposed, vulnerable, unprotected, uncertain and alone, completely open to and welcoming life as it happens, without the selfish conviction that all must yield you pleasure or profit, material or so-called spiritual. (494)

Self-interest and self-concern are the focal points of the false. Your daily life vibrates between desire and fear. Watch it intently and you will see how the mind assumes innumerable names and shapes, like a river foaming between the boulders. Trace every action to its selfish motive and look at the motive intently till it dissolves. Discard every self-seeking motive as soon as it is seen and you need not look for truth; truth will find you. (315)

Weak desires can be removed by introspection and meditation, but strong, deep-rooted ones must be fulfilled and their fruits,

sweet or bitter, tasted. (97)

Karma is only a store of unspent energies, of unfulfilled desires, and fears not understood. The store is being constantly replenished by new desires and fears. It need not be so for ever. Understand the root cause of your fears -estrangement from yourself; and of desires -the longing for the self, and your karma will dissolve like a dream. (411)

Desirelessness comes on its own when desire is recognized as false. You need not struggle with desire. Ultimately, it is an urge to happiness, which is natural as long as there is sorrow. Only see that there is no happiness in what you desire. Each pleasure is wrapped in pain. You soon discover that you cannot have one without the other. (455)

Nothing stands in the way of your liberation and it can happen here and now but for your being more interested in other things. And you cannot fight with your interests. You must go with them, see through them and watch them reveal themselves as mere errors of judgement and appreciation. (456)

Fearlessness comes by itself, when you see that there is nothing to be afraid of. When you walk in a crowded street, you just bypass people. Some you see, some you just glance at, but you do not stop. It is the stopping that creates the bottleneck. Keep moving! Disregard names and shapes, don't be attached to them; your attachment is your bondage. (351)

Break the bonds of memory and self-identification and the shell [of the person] will break by itself. There is a centre that imparts reality to whatever it perceives. All you need is to understand that you are the source of reality, that you give reality instead of getting it, that you need no support and no confirmation. Things are as they are because you accept them as they are. Stop accepting them and they will dissolve. Whatever you think about with desire or fear appears before you as real. Look at it without desire or fear and it does lose substance. Pleasure and pain are momentary. It is simpler and easier to disregard them than to act on them. (344)

Giving up desire after desire is a lengthy process with the end never in sight. Leave alone your desires and fears, give your entire attention to the subject, to him who is behind the experience of desire and fear. Ask: who desires? Let each

desire bring you back to yourself. (144)

Freedom comes through renunciation. All possession is bondage. If you do not have the wisdom and the strength to give up, just look at your possessions. Your mere looking will burn them up. If you can stand outside your mind, you will soon find that total renunciation of possessions and desires is the most obviously reasonable thing to do. You create the world and then worry about it. Becoming selfish makes you weak. If you think you have the strength and courage to desire, it is because you are young and inexperienced. Invariably the object of desire destroys the means of acquiring it and then itself withers away. It is all for the best, because it teaches you to shun desire like poison. No need of any acts of renunciation. Just turn your mind away, that is all. Desire is merely the fixation of the mind on an idea. Get it out of its groove by denying it attention. Whatever may be the desire or fear, don't dwell upon it. Here and there you may forget, it does not matter. Go back to your attempts till the brushing away of every desire and fear, of every reaction, becomes automatic. (338)

Whenever a thought or emotion of desire or fear comes to your mind, just turn away from it. I'm not talking of suppression. Just refuse attention. (349)

Increase and widen your desires till nothing but reality can fulfil them. It is not desire that is wrong, but its narrowness and smallness. Desire is devotion. By all means be devoted to the real, the infinite, the eternal heart of being. Your longing to be happy is there. Why? Because you love yourself. By all means, love yourself -wisely. What is wrong is to love yourself stupidly, so as to make yourself suffer. Love yourself wisely. Both indulgence and austerity have the same purpose in view - to make you happy. Indulgence is the stupid way, austerity is the wise way. Once you have gone through an experience, not to go through it again is austerity. To eschew the unnecessary is austerity. Not to anticipate pleasure or pain is austerity. Having things under control at all times is austerity. Desire by itself is not wrong. It is the choices that you make that are wrong. To imagine that some little thing - food, sex, power, fame - will make you happy is to deceive yourself. Only something as vast and deep as your real self can make you truly and lastingly happy. (211-2)

Your true home is in nothingness, in emptiness of all content.

You face it most cheerfully when you go to sleep! Find out for yourself the state of wakeful sleep and you will find it quite in harmony with your real nature. Words can only give you the idea, and the idea is not the experience. All I can say is that true happiness has no cause, and what has no cause is immovable. Which does not mean it is perceivable, as pleasure. What is perceivable is pain and pleasure; the state of freedom from sorrow can be described only negatively. (487-8)

Nothing can make you happier than you are. All search for happiness is misery and leads to more misery. The only happiness worth the name is the natural happiness of conscious being. (317)

All I plead with you is this: make love of your self perfect. Deny yourself nothing - give your self infinity and eternity, and discover that you do not need them; you are beyond. (414)

The desire to find the self will be surely fulfilled, provided you want nothing else. But you must be honest with yourself and really want nothing else. If, in the meantime, you want many other things and are engaged in their pursuit, your main purpose may be delayed until you grow wiser and cease being torn between contradictory urges. Go within, without swerving, without ever looking outward. (145)

You are concerned with your own happiness and I am telling you that there is no such thing. Happiness is never your own, it is where the "I" is not. I do not say it is beyond your reach; you have only to reach out beyond yourself, and you will find it. (439)

When you demand nothing of the world, nor of God, when you want nothing, seek nothing, expect nothing, then the Supreme State will come to you uninvited and unexpected. (195)

The Supreme is the easiest to reach, for it is your very being. It is enough to stop thinking and desiring anything but the Supreme. (66)

The cause of suffering is dependence, and independence is the remedy. Yoga is the science and the art of self-liberation through self-understanding. (473)

Self-surrender is the surrender of all self-concern. It cannot be

done, it happens when you realize your true nature. (478)

As long as you identify yourself with them [body and mind], you are bound to suffer; realize your independence and remain happy. I tell you, this is the secret of happiness. To believe that you depend on things and people for happiness is due to ignorance of your true nature; to know that you need nothing to be happy, except self-knowledge, is wisdom. (504)

A man who is given a stone and assured that it is a priceless diamond will be mightily pleased until he realizes his mistake; in the same way, pleasures lose their tang and pains their barb when the self is known. Both are seen as they are - conditional responses, mere reactions. (144-5)

Be aware that whatever happens, happens to you, by you, through you; that you are the creator, enjoyer and destroyer of all you perceive and you will not be afraid. Unafraid, you will not be unhappy, nor will you seek happiness. (468)

You can become a night watchman and live happily. It is what you are inwardly that matters. Your inner peace and joy you have to earn. It is much more difficult than earning money. No university can teach you to be yourself. (318)

You have to give up everything to know that you need nothing, not even your body. Your needs are unreal and your efforts are meaningless. You imagine that your possessions protect you. In reality they make you vulnerable. Realize yourself as away from all that can be pointed at as "this" or "that". You are un-reachable by any sensory experience or verbal construction. (339)

Don't you see that it is your very search for happiness that makes you feel miserable? Try the other way: indifferent to pain and pleasure, neither asking nor refusing, give all your attention to the level on which "I am" is timelessly present. Soon you will realize that peace and happiness are in your very nature and it is only seeking them through some particular channels that disturbs. Avoid the disturbance, that is all. (240)

Just turn away from all that occupies the mind; do whatever work you have to complete, but avoid new obligations; keep empty, keep available, resist not what comes uninvited. In the end, you reach a state of non-grasping, of joyful non-attachment, of inner ease and freedom indescribable, yet

wonderfully real. (375)

There is trouble only when you cling to something. When you hold on to nothing, no trouble arises. The relinquishing of the lesser is the gaining of the greater. Give up all and you gain all. Then life becomes what it was meant to be: pure radiation from an inexhaustible source. In that light the world appears dimly like a dream. (257)

Pain is physical, suffering is mental. Beyond the mind there is no suffering. Pain is essential for the survival of the body, but none compels you to suffer. Suffering is due entirely to clinging or resisting; it is a sign of our unwillingness to move on, to flow with life. As a sane life is free of pain, so is a saintly life free from suffering. A saint does not want things to be different from what they are; he knows that, considering all factors, they are unavoidable. He is friendly with the inevitable and, therefore, does not suffer. Pain he may know, but it does not shatter him. If he can, he does the needful to restore the lost balance, or he lets things take their course. (270)

You need not be attached to the non-essentials. Only the necessary is good. There is peace only in the essential. (481)

As long as you are interested in your present way of living, you will not abandon it. Discovery cannot come as long as you cling to the familiar. It is only when you realize fully the immense sorrow of your life and revolt against it that a way out can be found. (509)

Whatever may be the situation, if it is acceptable, it is pleasant. If it is not acceptable, it is painful. What makes it acceptable is not important; the cause may be physical, or psychological, or untraceable; acceptance is the decisive factor. Obversely, suffering is due to non-acceptance. Why [shouldn't pain be acceptable]? Did you ever try? Do try and you will find in pain a joy which pleasure cannot yield, for the simple reason that acceptance of pain takes you much deeper than pleasure does. The more we are conscious, the deeper the joy. Acceptance of pain, non-resistance, courage and endurance - these open deep and perennial sources of real happiness, true bliss. (277-8)

The light of consciousness passes through the film of memory and throws pictures on your brain. Because of the deficient and disordered state of your brain, what you perceive is distorted and coloured by feelings of like and dislike. Make your thinking

orderly and free from emotional overtones, and you will see people and things as they are, with clarity and charity. (416)

To see reality is as simple as to see one's face in a mirror. Only the mirror must be clear and true. A quiet mind, undistorted by desires and fears, free from ideas and opinions, clear on all the levels, is needed to reflect the reality. Be clear and quiet, alert and detached, all else will happen by itself. (397)

[Your world] is true in essence but not in appearance. Be free of desires and fears and at once your vision will clear and you shall see all things as they are. (533)

Nature is neither pleasant nor painful. It is all intelligence and beauty. Pain and pleasure are in the mind. Change your scale of values and all will change. Pleasure and pain are mere disturbances of the senses; treat them equally and there will be only bliss. And the world is what you make it; by all means, make it happy. Only contentment can make you happy, desires fulfilled breed more desires. Keeping away from all desires and contentment in what comes by itself is a very fruitful state, a precondition to the state of fullness. Don't distrust its apparent sterility and emptiness. Believe me, it is the satisfaction of desires that breeds misery. Freedom from desires is bliss. (249)

You must not indulge in forecasts and plans, born of memory and anticipation. It is one of the peculiarities of a gnani that he is not concerned with future. Your concern with future is due to fear of pain and desire for pleasure; to the gnani all is bliss: he is happy with whatever comes. (285)

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