

Nonduality Salon Presents

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

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The way to Realization: Part One

Not through activity. No effort is necessary, but there is a precondition: earnestness now.

Not through activity.

Where is the need of changing anything? The mind is changing anyhow all the time. Look at your mind dispassionately; this is enough to calm it. When it is quiet, you can go beyond it. Do not keep it busy all the time. Stop it, and just be. If you give it rest, it will settle down and recover its purity and strength. Constant thinking makes it decay. (311)

Nothing you do will change you, for you need no change. You may change your mind or your body, but it is always something external to you that has changed, not yourself. Why bother at all to change? Realize once for all that neither your body nor your mind, nor even your consciousness is yourself and stand alone in your true nature beyond consciousness and unconsciousness. No effort can take you there, only the clarity of understanding. (520)

Don't try to reform yourself, just see the futility of all change. The changeful keeps on changing while the changeless is waiting. Do not expect the changeful to take you to the changeless - it can never happen. Only when the very idea of changing is seen as false and abandoned, the changeless can come into its own. (521)

Most people's activities are valueless, if not outright destructive. Dominated by desire and fear, they can do nothing good. Ceasing to do evil precedes beginning to do good. Hence the need for stopping all activities for a time, to investigate

one's urges and their motives, see all that is false in one's life, purge the mind of all evil and then only restart work, beginning with one's obvious duties. (345)

If you are earnest, you will find that in the end you will get fed up with roaming and regret the waste of energy and time. To find your self you need not take a single step. (334)

The self-styled gurus talk of ripeness and effort, of merits and achievements, of destiny and grace; all these are mere mental formations, projections of an addicted mind. Instead of helping, they obstruct. (422)

Do not rush into activity. Neither learning nor action can really help. (260)

It is not what you do, but what you stop doing that matters. (483)

Activity is not action. Action is hidden, unknown, unknowable. You can only know the fruit. (354)

Action does not lead to perfection; perfection is expressed in action. (419)

There is a difference between work and mere activity. All nature works. Work is nature, nature is work. On the other hand, activity is based on desire and fear, on longing to possess and enjoy, on fear of pain and annihilation. Work is by the whole for the whole, activity is by oneself for oneself. (219)

Your mind is steeped in the habits of evaluation and acquisition, and will not admit that the incomparable and unobtainable are waiting timelessly within your own heart for recognition. All you have to do is to abandon all memories and expectations. Just keep yourself ready in utter nakedness and nothingness. (498-9)

Do nothing, just be. In being all happens naturally. (227)

Be nothing, know nothing, have nothing. This is the only life worth living, the only happiness worth having. (499)

You can do nothing. What time has brought about, time will take away. This is the end of yoga, to realize independence. All that happens, happens in and to the mind, not to the source

of the "I am". Once you realize that all happens by itself (call it destiny, or the will of God, or mere accident), you remain as witness only, understanding and enjoying, but not perturbed. You are responsible only for what you can change. All you can change is only your attitude. There lies your responsibility. (451)

You cannot change your circumstances, but your attitudes you can change. (480-1)

There is nothing we can do, we can only let things happen according to their nature. Clarity and charity is action. Love is not lazy and clarity directs. You need not worry about action, look after your mind and heart. Stupidity and selfishness are the only evil. (496)

In reality things are done to you, not by you. Your desire just happens to you along with its fulfilment or non-fulfilment. You can change neither. You may believe that you exert yourself, strive and struggle. Again, it all merely happens, including the fruits of the work. Neither is by you and for you. All is in the picture exposed on the cinema screen, nothing in the light, including what you take yourself to be, the person. You are the light only. (481)

Life itself is desireless. But the false self wants to continue - pleasantly. Therefore, it is always engaged in ensuring one's continuity. Life is unafraid and free. As long as you have the idea of influencing events, liberation is not for you: the very notion of doership, of being a cause, is bondage. (298)

Everybody wants to be active, but where do his actions originate? There is no central point: each action begets another, meaninglessly and painfully, in endless succession. The alternation of work and pause is not there. First find the immutable centre where all movement takes birth. Just like a wheel turns round an axle, so must you be always in the centre and not whirling at the periphery. (349)

The witness is that which says "I know". The person says "I do". Now, to say "I know" is not untrue, it is merely limited. But to say "I do" is altogether false, because there is nobody who does; all happens by itself, including the idea of being a doer. The universe is full of action, but there is no actor. There are numberless persons small and big and very big, who, through identification, imagine themselves as acting, but it

does not change the fact that the world of action (mahadakash) is one single whole in which all depends on, and affects all. The stars affect us deeply and we affect the stars. Step back from action to consciousness, leave action to the body and the mind; it is their domain. Remain as pure witness, till even witnessing dissolves in the Supreme. (400-1)

Liberation is not the result of some means skilfully applied, nor of circumstances. It is beyond the causal process. Nothing can compel it, nothing can prevent it. (456)

The Self is near and the way to it is easy. All you need doing is doing nothing. (236)

Stay open and quiet, that is all. What you seek is so near you that there is no place for a way. (196)

Having realized that you cannot influence the results, pay no attention to your desire and fears. Let them come and go. Don't give them the nourishment of interest and attention. (481)

There is nothing to do. Just be. Do nothing. Be. No climbing mountains and sitting in caves. I do not even say: "be yourself", since you do not know yourself. Just be. Having seen that you are neither the "outer" world of perceivables, nor the "inner" world of thinkables, that you are neither body nor mind, just be. (331)

No effort is necessary.

Do not imagine that you can change through effort. Violence, even turned against yourself, as in austerities and penance, will remain fruitless. (498)

Your needs are unreal and your efforts are meaningless. (339)

There is no place for effort in reality. It is selfishness, due to self-identification with the body, that is the main problem and the cause of other problems. And selfishness cannot be removed by effort, only by clear insight into its causes and effects. Effort is a sign of conflict between incompatible desires. They should be seen as they are - then only they dissolve. (476)

Unless you make tremendous efforts, you will not be convinced that effort will take you nowhere. The self is so

self-confident that unless it is totally discouraged it will not give up. Mere verbal conviction is not enough. Hard facts alone can show the absolute nothingness of the self-image. (523)

The people who begin their sadhana are so feverish and restless that they have to be very busy to keep themselves on the track. An absorbing routine is good for them. After some time, they quieten down and turn away from effort. In peace and silence, the skin of the "I" dissolves and the inner and the outer become one. The real sadhana is effortless. (483)

In each [school of yoga], one can progress up to the point when all desire for progress must be abandoned to make further progress possible. Then all schools are given up, all effort ceases; in solitude and darkness, the last step is made which ends ignorance and fear for ever. (477)

Abandon every attempt, just be; don't strive, don't struggle, let go every support, hold on to the blind sense of being, brushing off all else. This is enough. (494)

You can also grow like this [effortlessly, like a child], but you must not indulge in forecasts and plans, born of memory and anticipation. (285)

It is your idea that you have to do things that entangle you in the results of your efforts - the motive, the desire, the failure to achieve, the sense of frustration - all this holds you back. Simply look at whatever happens and know that you are beyond it. (148)

It has nothing to do with effort. Just turn away, look between the thoughts, rather than at the thoughts. When you happen to walk in a crowd, you do not fight every man you meet, you just find your way between. When you fight, you invite a fight. But when you do not resist, you meet no resistance. When you refuse to play the game, you are out of it. (349)

A quiet mind is all you need. All else will happen rightly, once your mind is quiet. As the sun on rising makes the world active, so does self-awareness affect changes in the mind. In the light of calm and steady self-awareness, inner energies wake up and work miracles without any effort on your part. (311)

The window is the absence of the wall, and it gives air and light because it is empty. Be empty of all mental content, of all imagination and effort, and the very absence of obstacles will cause reality to rush in. (260)

Deepen and broaden your awareness of yourself and all the blessings will flow. You need not seek anything, all will come to you most naturally and effortlessly. (261)

Keep the "I am" in the focus of awareness, remember that you are , watch yourself ceaselessly and the unconscious will flow into the conscious without any special effort on your part. (447)

There is no effort in witnessing. You understand that you are the witness only, and the understanding acts. You need nothing more, just remember that you are the witness only. (303)

Having realized that I am with, and yet beyond the world, I became free from all desire and fear. I did not reason out that I should be free, I found myself free, unexpectedly, without the least effort. (269)

[I can describe the supreme, natural state] only by negation, as uncaused, independent, unrelated, undivided, uncomposed, unshakable, unquestionable, unreachable by effort. (16)

But there is a precondition: earnestness now.

All waiting is futile. To depend on time to solve our problems is self-delusion. The future, left to itself merely repeats the past. Change can only happen now, never in the future. (402)

Action delayed is action abandoned. There may be other chances for other actions, but the present moment is lost, irretrievably lost. All preparation is for the future - you cannot prepare for the present. (493)

Once you realize that the body depends on the mind, and the mind on consciousness, and consciousness on awareness, and not the other way round, your question about waiting for self-realization till you die is answered. It is not that you must be free from the "I-am-the-body" idea first, and then realize the self. It is definitely the other way round - you cling to the false because you do not know the true. Earnestness, not perfection, is a precondition to self-realization. Virtues and powers come

with realization, not before. (434)

For this [self-realization], you need a well-ordered and quiet life, peace of mind and immense earnestness. (491)

Earnestness is not a yearning for the fruits of one's endeavours. It is an expression of an inner shift of interest away from the false, the unessential, the personal. (455-6)

[The person is removed] by determination. Understand that it must go and wish it to go - it shall go if you are earnest about it. (441)

It is earnestness that is indispensable, the crucial factor. Sadhana is only a vessel and it must be filled to the brim with earnestness, which is but love in action. For nothing can be done without love. (482-3)

You must find your own way. Unless you find it yourself, it will not be your own way and will take you nowhere. Earnestly live your truth as you have found it, act on the little you have understood. It is earnestness that will take you through, not cleverness - your own or another's. (499)

To find reality you must be real in the smallest daily action; there can be no deceit in the search for truth. (515)

Try. One step at a time is easy. Energy flows from earnestness. (528)

Your first task is to see the sorrow in you and around you; your next, to long intensely for liberation. The very intensity of longing will guide you; you need no other guide. (236)

It is the absolute in you that takes you to the absolute beyond you - absolute truth, love, selflessness are the decisive factors in self-realization. With earnestness these can be reached. (461)

The remedy lies in clarity and integrity of thinking. Try to understand that you live in a world of illusions, examine them and uncover their roots. The very attempt to do so will make you earnest, for there is bliss in right endeavour. (529)

Mere physical renunciation is only a token of earnestness, but earnestness alone does not liberate. There must be

understanding which comes with alert perceptivity, eager enquiry and deep investigation. You must work relentlessly for your salvation from sin and sorrow. (534)

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