

Nonduality Salon Presents

ASMI

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

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The Way to Self-Realization: Part Six

Meditation, Witness attitude, Awareness.

Meditation

With deep and quiet breathing, vitality will improve, which will influence the brain and help the mind to grow pure and stable and fit for meditation. Without vitality, little can be done, hence the importance of its protection and increase. Posture and breathing are a part of yoga, for the body must be healthy and well under control, but too much concentration on the body defeats its own purpose, for it is the mind that is primary in the beginning. When the mind has been put to rest and disturbs no longer the inner space (chidakash), the body acquires a new meaning and its transformation becomes both necessary and possible. (496-7)

Whatever you may have to do, watch your mind. Also you must have moments of complete inner peace and quiet, when your mind is absolutely still. If you miss it, you miss the entire thing. If you do not, the silence of the mind will dissolve and absorb all else. (215)

Keep quiet. Do your work in the world, but inwardly keep quiet. Then all will come to you. Do not rely on your work for realization. It may profit others, but not you. Your hope lies in keeping silent in your mind and quiet in your heart. Realized people are very quiet. (402)

Give all your attention to the question: "What is it that makes me conscious?", until your mind becomes the question itself

and cannot think of anything else. (447)

Try to be, only to be. The all-important word is "try". Allot enough time daily for sitting quietly and trying, just trying, to go beyond the personality with its addictions and obsessions. Don't ask how, it cannot be explained. You just keep on trying until you succeed. If you persevere, there can be no failure. What matters supremely is sincerity, earnestness; you must really have had surfeit of being the person you are; now see the urgent need of being free of this unnecessary self-identification with a bundle of memories and habits. This steady resistance against the unnecessary is the secret of success. (509)

The value of regular meditation is that it takes you away from the humdrum of daily routine and reminds you that your not what you believe yourself to be. (492)

Meditation is a deliberate attempt to pierce into the higher states of consciousness and finally go beyond it. The art of meditation is the art of shifting the focus of attention to ever subtler levels, without losing one's grip on the levels left behind. The final stage of meditation is reached when the sense of identity goes beyond the "I-am-so-and-so", beyond "so-I-am", beyond "I-am-the-witness-only", beyond "there-is", beyond all ideas into the impersonally personal pure being. But you must be energetic when you take to meditation. It is definitely not a part-time occupation. Limit your interests and activities to what is needed for you and your dependents' barest needs. Save all your energies and time for breaking the wall your mind had built around you. Believe me, you will not regret. (413)

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)

No particular thought can be mind's natural state, only silence. Not the idea of silence, but silence itself. When the mind is in its natural state, it reverts to silence spontaneously after every experience, or, rather, every experience happens against the background of silence. (242)

Keep quiet, undisturbed, and the wisdom and the power will

come on their own. You need not hanker. Wait in silence of the heart and mind. It is very easy to be quiet, but willingness is rare. (494)

To go beyond the mind, you must be silent and quiet. Peace and silence, silence and peace - this is the way beyond. Stop asking questions. (450)

To go beyond, you need alert immobility, quiet attention. (217)

These moments of inner quiet will burn out all obstacles without fail. Don't doubt its efficacy. Try it. (217)

Meditation will help you to find your bonds, loosen them, untie them and cast your moorings. When you are no longer attached to anything, you have done your share. The rest will be done for you. (54)

When you are not in a hurry and the mind is free from anxieties, it becomes quiet and in the silence something may be heard which is ordinarily too fine and subtle for perception. The mind must be open and quiet to see. You need not worry about your worries. Just be. Do not try to be quiet; do not make "being quiet" into a task to be performed. Don't be restless about "being quiet", miserable about "being happy". Just be aware that you are, and remain aware. Don't say "Yes, I am. What next?" There is no "next" in "I am". It is a timeless state. (508)

When you sit quiet and watch yourself, all kinds of things may come to the surface. Do nothing about them, don't react to them; as they have come so will they go, by themselves. All that matters is mindfulness, total awareness of oneself, or rather of one's mind. (219)

Silence is the main factor. In peace and silence you grow. (375)

In peace and silence, the skin of the "I" dissolves and the inner and the outer become one. (483)

Witness attitude

Abandon all ideas about yourself and you will find yourself to be the pure witness, beyond all that can happen to the body or

the mind. (226)

There is the identity of what you are, and there is the person superimposed on it. All you know is the person. The identity, which is not a person, you do not know, for you never doubted, never asked yourself the crucial question: "Who am I". The identity is the witness of the person, and sadhana consists in shifting the emphasis from the superficial and changeful person to the immutable and ever-present witness. (442)

When the mind is quiet, we come to know ourselves as the pure witness. We withdraw from the experience and its experiencer, and stand apart in pure awareness, which is between and beyond the two. The personality, based on self-identification, on imagining oneself to be something: "I'm this, I'm that", continues, but only as a part of the objective world. Its identification with the witness snaps. (14)

[For a Westerner] the right procedure is to adhere to the thought that he is the ground of all knowledge, the immutable and perennial awareness of all that happens to the senses and the mind. If he keeps it in mind all the time, aware and alert, he is bound to break the bounds of non-awareness and emerge into pure life, light and love. The idea "I am the witness only" will purify the body and the mind and open the eye of wisdom. Then man goes beyond illusion and his heart is free of all desires. (76)

Words can bring you only up to their own limit; to go beyond, you must abandon them. Remain as the silent witness only. (451)

If you are angry or in pain, separate yourself from anger and pain and watch them. Externalization is the first step to liberation. Step away and look. The physical events will go on happenig, but by themselves they have no importance. It is the mind alone that matters. If you could only keep quiet, clear of memories and expectations, you would be able to discern the beautiful pattern of events. It is your restlessness that causes chaos. (247)

Watch your thoughts as you watch the street traffic. People come and go; you register without response. It may not be easy in the beginning, but with some practice you will find that your mind can function on many levels at the same time and you can be aware of them all. It is only when you have a vested

interest in any particular level that your attention gets caught in it and you black out on other levels. (240)

You need not stop thinking. Just cease being interested. It is disinterestedness that liberates. Don't hold on, that is all. (241)

Refuse attention [to things], let things come and go. Desires and thoughts are also things. Disregard them. Since immemorial time, the dust of events was covering the clear mirror of your mind, so that only memories you could see. Brush off the dust before it has time to settle; this will lay bare the old layers until the true nature of your mind is discovered. It is all very simple and comparatively easy; be earnest and patient, that is all. Dispassion, detachment, freedom from desire and fear, from all self-concern, mere awareness, free from memory and expectation, this is the state of mind to which discovery can happen. After all, liberation is but the freedom to discover. (494)

In the mirror of your mind all kinds of pictures appear and disappear. Knowing that they are entirely your own creations, watch them silently come and go. Be alert, but not perturbed. This attitude of silent observation is the very foundation of yoga. You see the picture, but you are not the picture. (469)

Witnessing is natural and no problem. The problem is excessive interest, leading to self-identification. Whatever you are engrossed in, you take to be real. (351)

The real exists and is of the nature of witness-consciousness. Of course it is beyond the witness, but to enter it one must first realize the state of pure witnessing. The awareness of conditions brings one to the unconditioned. We can talk only of the unreal, the illusory, the transient, the conditioned. To go beyond, we must pass through total negation of everything as having independent existence. All things depend on consciousness. And consciousness depends on the witness. (176)

Develop the witness attitude and you will find in your own experience that detachment brings control. The state of witnessing is full of power, there is nothing passive about it. (186)

The witness is not indifferent. He is the fulness of understanding and compassion. Only as the witness you can

help another. (451)

The outer world neither can help nor hinder. No system, no pattern of action will take you to your goal. Give up all working for a future, concentrate totally on the now, be concerned only with your response to every movement of life as it happens. (333)

Know yourself to be the changeless witness of the changeful mind. That is enough. (507)

Just remember what you are. Use every incident of the day to remind you that without you as the witness there would be neither animal nor God. Understand that you are both, the essence and the surface of all there is, and remain firm in your understanding. (476)

The witness attitude is also faith; it is faith in oneself. You believe that you are not what you experience, and you look at everything as from a distance. 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. If in the state of witnessing you ask yourself 'Who am I?', the answer comes at once, though it is wordless and silent. Cease to be the object and become the subject of all that happens; once having turned within, you will find yourself beyond the subject. When you have found yourself, you will find that you are also beyond the object, that both the subject and the object exist in you, but you are neither. (303)

[The witness-consciousness] is the reflection of the real in the mind (buddhi). The witness is the door through which you pass beyond. (52)

Awareness

First we must know ourselves as witnesses only, dimensionless and timeless centres of observation, and then realize that immense ocean of pure awareness, which is both mind and matter and beyond both. (205)

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. You cannot

approach it in worship. No external activity can reach the inner self; worship and prayers remain on the surface only; to do deeper meditation is essential, the striving to go beyond the states of sleep, dream and waking. In the beginning the attempts are irregular, then they recur more often, become regular, then continuous and intense, until all obstacles are conquered. (447)

For reality to be, the ideas of "me" and "mine" must go. They will go if you let them. Then your normal natural state reappears, in which you are neither the body nor the mind, neither the "me" nor the "mine", but in a different state of being altogether. It is pure awareness of being, without being this or that, without any self-identification with anything in particular or in general. In that pure light of consciousness there is nothing, not even the idea of nothing. There is only light. (387)

The body and the mind are only symptoms of ignorance, of misapprehension: Behave as if you were pure awareness, bodiless and mindless, spaceless and timeless, beyond "where" and "when" and "how". Make your mind and body express the real which is all and beyond all. (255)

Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. (221)

True awareness (samvid) is a state of pure witnessing, without the least attempt to do anything about the event witnessed. Your thoughts and feelings, words and actions may also be a part of the event; you watch all unconcerned, in the full light of clarity and understanding. You understand precisely what is going on, because it does not affect you. It may seem to be an attitude of cold aloofness, but it is not really so. Once you are in it, you will find that you love what you see, whatever may be its nature. This choiceless love is the touchstone of awareness. If it is not there, you are merely interested, for some personal reasons. (382)

There is little difference between the conscious and the unconscious - they are essentially the same. The waking state differs from deep sleep in the presence of the witness. A ray of awareness illumines a part of our mind and that part becomes our dream or waking consciousness, while awareness appears

as the witness. The witness usually knows only consciousness. Sadhana consists in the witness turning back first on his conscious, then upon himself in his own awareness. Self-awareness is Yoga. (532)

Don't fight with what you take to be obstacles on your way. Just be interested in them, watch them, observe, enquire. Let anything happen - good or bad. But don't let yourself be submerged by what happens. The mind must learn that beyond the moving mind there is the background of awareness, which does not change. The mind must come to know the true self and respect it and cease covering it up, like the moon which obscures the sun during solar eclipse. Just realize that nothing observable, or experienceable is you, or binds you. Take no notice of what is not yourself. You are aware anyhow, you need not try to be. What you need is to be aware of being aware. Be aware deliberately and consciously, broaden and deepen the field of awareness. You are always conscious of the mind, but you are not aware of yourself as being conscious. (220)

Be aware of being conscious and seek the source of consciousness. That is all. (328)

No thought but "I am".

When I met my guru, he told me: 'You are not what you take yourself to be. Find out what you are. Watch the sense "I am", find your real self'. I obeyed him, because I trusted him. I did as he told me. All my spare time I would spend looking at myself in silence. And what difference it made, and how soon! It took me only three years to realize my true nature. (301)

If you trust me, believe when I tell you that you are the pure awareness that illumines consciousness and its infinite content. Realize this and live accordingly. If you do not believe me, then go within, enquiring "What am I?", or focus your mind on "I am", which is pure and simple being. (26-7)

Distrust your mind and go beyond. [Then you will find] the direct experience of being, knowing and loving. There are many starting points -they all lead to the same goal. You may begin with selfless work, abandoning the fruits of action; you may then give up thinking and end in giving up all desires. Here, giving up is the operational factor. Or you may not bother about any thing you want, or think, or do, and just stay

in the thought and feeling "I am", focusing "I am" firmly in your mind. All kinds of experience may come to you -remain unmoved in the knowledge that all perceivable is transient and only the "I am" endures. (50)

You have tasted so many things - all came to naught. Only the sense "I am" persisted, unchanged. Stay with the changeless among the changeful, until you are able to go beyond. (343)

Just look away from all that happens in your mind and bring it to the feeling "I am". The "I am" is not a direction. It is the negation of all direction. Ultimately even the "I am" will have to go, for you need not keep on asserting what is obvious. Bringing the mind to the feeling "I am" merely helps in turning the mind away from everything else. When the mind is kept away from its preoccupations, it becomes quiet. If you do not disturb this quiet and stay in it, you find that it is permeated with a light and a love you have never known; and yet you recognize it at one as your own nature. Once you have passed through this experience, you will never be the same man again; the unruly mind may break its peace and obliterate its vision; but it is bound to return, provided the effort is sustained; until the day when all bonds are broken, delusions and attachments end, and life becomes supremely concentrated in the present. (308)

What prevents the insight into one's true nature is the weakness and obtuseness of the mind and its tendency to skip the subtle and focus the gross only. When you follow my advice and try to keep your mind on the notion of "I am" only, you become fully aware of your mind and its vagaries. Awareness, being lucid harmony (satva) in action, dissolves dullness and quietens the restlessness of the mind, and gently but steadily changes its very substance. This change need not be spectacular; it may be hardly noticeable; yet it is a deep and fundamental shift from darkness into light, from inadvertence to awareness. 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. (272)

What was born must die. Only the unborn is deathless. Find what is it that never sleeps and never wakes, and whose pale reflection is our sense of "I". (12)

All I can say truly is: "I am", all else is inference. But the inference has become a habit. Destroy all habits of thinking and seeing. The sense "I am" is the manifestation of a deeper cause, which you may call self, God, Reality or by any other name. The "I am" is in the world, but it is the key which can open the door out of the world. (199)

All you have to do is to understand that you love the self and the self loves you, and that the sense "I am" is the link between you both, a token of identity in spite of apparent diversity. Look at the "I am" as a sign of love between the inner and the outer, the real and the appearance. Just like in a dream all is different, except the sense of "I", which enables you to say "I dreamt", so does the sense of "I am" enables you to say "I am my real Self again. I do nothing, nor is anything done to me. I am what I am and nothing can affect me. I appear to depend on everything, but in fact all depends on me." (388)

You are always the Supreme. But your attention is fixed on things, physical or mental. When your attention is off a thing and not yet fixed on another, in the interval you are pure being. When through the practice of discrimination and detachment (viveka-vairagya), you lose sight of sensory and mental states, pure being emerges as the natural state. By focusing the mind on "I am", on the sense of being, "I am so-and-so" dissolves; "am a witness only" remains and that too submerges in "I am all". Then the all becomes the One, and the One yourself. (90)

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. Wrong desires and fears, false ideas, social inhibitions are blocking and preventing its free interplay with the conscious. Once free to mingle, the two become one and the one becomes all. (447)

"I am" is the ultimate fact. "Who am I?" is the ultimate question to which everybody must find an answer; the same in essence, varied in expression. (477)

Give up all questions except one: "Who am I?" After all, the only fact you are sure of is that you are. The "I am" is certain. The "I am this" is not. Struggle to find out what you are in reality. (70)

Your dwelling on the fact "I am" will soon create another

chance [of self-realization]. For attitude attracts opportunity. All you know is second-hand. Only "I am" is first-hand and needs no proofs. Stay with it. (522)

Realization is but the opposite of ignorance. To take the world as real and one's self as unreal is ignorance, the cause of sorrow. To know the self as the only reality and all else as temporal and transient is freedom, peace and joy. It is all very simple. Instead of seeing things as imagined, learn to see them as they are. When you can see everything as it is, you will also see yourself as you are. It is like cleansing a mirror. The same mirror that shows you the world as it is, will also show you your own face. The thought "I am" is the polishing cloth. Use it. (29)

First of all, establish a constant contact with your self, be with yourself all the time. Into self-awareness all blessings flow. Begin as a centre of observation, deliberate cognizance, and grow into a centre of love in action. "I am" is a tiny seed which will grow into a mighty tree - quite naturally, without a trace of effort. (510)

Just keep in mind the feeling "I am", merge in it, till your mind and feeling become one. By repeated attempts, you will stumble on the right balance of attention and affection, and your mind will be firmly established in the thought-feeling "I am". Whatever you think, say or do, this sense of immutable and affectionate being remains as the ever-present background of the mind. (48)

Relax and watch the "I am". Reality is just behind it. Keep quiet, keep silent; it will emerge, or, rather, it will take you in. (520-1)

Look at yourself steadily - it is enough. The door that locks you in is also the door that lets you out. The "I am" is the door. Stay at it until it opens. As a matter of fact, it is open, only you are not at it. You are waiting at the non-existing painted doors, which will never open. (442)

Refuse all thoughts except one: the thought "I am". The mind will rebel in the beginning, but with patience and perseverance it will yield and keep quiet. Once you are quiet, things will begin to happen spontaneously and quite naturally, without any interference on your part. (18-19)

When I say: 'remember "I am" all the time', I mean: 'come back to it repeatedly'. (242)

Hold on to the sense "I am" to the exclusion of everything else. When thus the mind becomes completely silent, it shines with a new light and vibrates with a new knowledge. It all comes spontaneously, you need only hold on to the "I am". (332)

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