

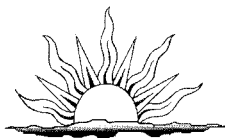
gleanings from
nisargadatta



Gleanings From Nisargadatta

Gleanings From Nisargadatta

Mark West



mark@gleaningsfromnisargadatta.net
<http://www.gleaningsfromnisargadatta.net>

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First printing: December 2006

Published by Beyond Description Publishing
<http://www.beyonddescription.net>

Printed in the United States of America

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Foreword

A proper foreword to this book cannot be written without first mentioning "Sailor" Bob Adamson, a friend and contemporary of Mark West during their experiences living in India in the 1970s while in pursuit of spiritual enlightenment.

It is no coincidence at all that many of those who have found their way to Bob Adamson while on the "path", have done so "through" the teachings of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj. Many clear and current voices on the pure message of Non-Duality have followed this route, such as John Wheeler, Gilbert Schultz, and Stephen Wingate.

Bob Adamson and Mark West provide an incredible translation and retransmission of Nisargadatta's message (each in their own ways) which is really a pure distillation of ancient wisdom that they heard spoken years ago in a "far off land" and in a foreign language, prepared for fresh imbibing by you, the reader, right here and right now.

The clarity of Nisargadatta's message, in this small volume, is due in no small measure to the openness of the listener and his skill in recording and preserving not just the words, but capturing enough of the hologram to produce a powerful reproduction of the experience of receiving the complete and undiluted message of this incredible sage.

Nisargadatta makes it crystal clear that **all structures**, be they physical, conceptual, or other, are like waves arisen from the ocean which not only will inevitably crash back into their source, but they have never been separate from it for even an instant.

A clear reception of this message invalidates the need for any methods, teachers, or time to reach enlightenment or understanding. Reality is that which is ever present and never changes and you are that.

My deepest gratitude to Mark for preserving this material and making it available and to my friend, Gilbert Schultz, for “discovering” Mark and encouraging and helping him to share it.

— Burt Jurgens

November 1st, 2006

Introduction – Part 1

These notes and talks, including questions and answers, were taken down verbatim and collected by me over a period of eleven months, from July 1976 to May 1977, while in the living presence of the sage Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj at his residence in Bombay, India.

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj is a sage in the true Indian tradition. His peculiar shunning of name, fame and wealth and his remaining to live in a very humble manner in a modest little tenement building in the back streets of Bombay bears testimony to this fact. He says in his characteristic way:

“Let others help the world, build large Ashrams and take in disciples. To me, all these activities are vanity and illusion. Since I need nothing and am complete in myself, why should I trouble myself with trivial worldly gains and activities?”

His simple message will throw light on the path for many genuine seekers after Truth in this troubled time when so many so-called Gurus and God-men are giving out so many different ways and techniques to attain something which in actual fact we have never lost. His message is very simple and not clothed in any esoteric or hidden meanings. It is indeed a shortcut and so simple that an undiscerning person would pass it up or disbelieve it for that very reason.

The sage says that Truth is naked and before everyone’s eyes to see, and that if anyone tells you that it is hidden, esoteric or secret, then know for certain that person has not understood Reality or Truth at all. The glory and majesty of such a sage as Nisargadatta (The giver of the natural or original state) Maharaj is beyond conception and totally ineffable — it is the true glory of every one of us, whether we are aware of it or not, and I feel blessed to be able to share with the world at large in this troubled time some of the priceless nectar of his words, thoughts and discourses.

My special love, thanks and gratitude are hereby acknowledged to the translator Mr. S. V. Saprey, a man of very great intellect, who was not only able to translate the difficult high-flown Marathi language of the sage into English, but was also able to convey and to precipitate in me the correct understanding of what the sage was saying.

This book could also rightly be called “The Highest Philosophy” or “The End of all Philosophy”, for to the average person the conviction that *this vast universe depends on me and not vice-versa* would probably sound egotistical and blasphemous, whereas to the rare man of wisdom and insight it would be the essential thesis of Self-realization.

Introduction – Part 2

Why does man believe in birth and death? Is it not because of his conditioning, someone has told him — you were born and shall die? These are the questions posed by the sage. Why has man not tried to find out the answer to this basic question of birth and death? For if one were to inquire within oneself earnestly, says the sage, one would find that birth and death is another myth, a paper tiger, an untruth and an erroneously held belief.

If this is so — if what the sage says is correct — is this not the greatest good news, the most significant information ever to be proclaimed anywhere at any time? Is this not the most important question, the most significant thing for each and every human being to know? Consider the following words from a late twentieth century Indian Saint, Meher Baba:

“To penetrate into the essence of all being and significance and to release the fragrance of that inner attainment for the guidance and benefit of others, by expressing in the world of forms, Truth, love, purity and beauty, this is the sole game which has any intrinsic worth; all other happenings, incidents and attainments, can in themselves have no lasting importance.”

Consider also the following words of the late nineteenth century philosopher and poet Friedrich Nietzsche:

“One who has climbed the highest mountains (realized his true nature) laughs at all tragedies, real or imagined.”

Apparently for the sage or the man who has true discrimination and insight, death itself becomes a laughable absurdity. To a man for whom the fear of death does not exist, to such a man would life be any problem? Obviously not, for he would be free of all tensions, worries and anxieties, his mind would not be always anxiously contemplating the future or despairing over the past, both of which are only a myth or imagination to the truly

awakened man.

During the dream I may be the King of England or the President of the United States, but upon awakening may find that this was not so, that I was only asleep and dreaming these things. Similarly with the dream of this embodied life in a world where there is birth and death, if I were to inquire earnestly I may find that in reality I was never born at all, that the person I thought I was is only a misunderstanding, an illusory appearance, a false dream.

This is the challenge and question put to us by the sage, the man of wisdom. He is the awakener, the ringing bell that tolls for all of us to awaken from this dream and deep sleep of ignorance which has enveloped us in this modern age.

Mark West

India, May 1977

**Notes taken from dialogues with
Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj**

1976, July 1st – 6th, Khetwadi

Maharaj:

Sleep is ignorance, it is equivalent to the silent un-manifest, nothing is known. Waking and dreaming are extensions of sleep.

There are three basic drives: sex, food and sleep. All other drives are for entertainment only. They are not worthy of you. You are beyond all desire, which itself depends solely on the ***I am*** consciousness. When all desire has vanished, consciousness will also vanish — what remains is the Reality.

Q: *Is effort required?*

M: No effort is required. Do not attempt to suppress your desires, simply refrain from identifying with them — “I am not this desire.” The desire will, of itself, disappear.

Q: *What is the nature of the Real?*

M: The Reality cannot be described, it can only be hinted at by negation.

After all else has been negated, the Real remains.

1976, July 7th

Maharaj:

Before waking nothing is known. It is only on consciousness becoming manifest that there is anything to know. You are that unknown — seeking to know the unknown. The known arises and subsides in the unknown (Self) so that knowledge will not help you to know the unknown.

All actions are performed by the *Ishwara* principle (*Word, God or consciousness, I am*), which is time-bound and has its being in the unknown. So what is there to do?

What can you do that will be to your advantage, or disadvantage, when you are already the Self? You can only abide as the Self by refusing to give the stamp of Reality to anything else.

In your future *sadhana* (spiritual practice), will you do it yourself or will you get someone else to do it for you? Perhaps you will get your consciousness of **I am** to do your *sadhana* for you, for without this **I** consciousness, you can do nothing. Why say that I do anything? **I am** consciousness does everything and this **I am** is nothing but knowledge without attributes, which is time-bound. All that you think you are, is (made of) thoughts, which like all thoughts, give way to other thoughts and pass away (e.g., I am now a child, a young man, an old man, etc.).

Not to express or remember is natural to the *Parabrahman* (Reality). When consciousness and body are there, the feeling “I am so and so” comes to you. When consciousness goes, only *Paramatman* (supreme reality) remains. No effect or impression produced by consciousness is made or remains. My essence is without any attachment, attribute or contamination.

Whatever has been done through the consciousness of ***I am*** by all men (even Christ-Jesus), I do not remember, it has not been registered in my Essence. Essence is pure, beyond, transcendental.

The wrong identification with the body is the main contamination. Even this does not really contaminate the Self. If what you have heard here really touches you, you can become torches for people in Australia and set things straight and simple for people.

My guru told me that I am *Brahman* (Reality), and while I was puzzling over it, it happened. Lose your individuality in order to become torches quickly. Until one loses one’s personality, one can never know my state. It will work for you as it did for me; there is no difference in essence. The greatest obstacle is the ***I am*** growing over your true nature, which gives you the feeling “I am doing this” and “I am so and so”, so you feel benefited by this ***I am***, but you are really being cheated by it.

A Guru must have *Brahma-Jnana* (knowledge of God). He must know the connection between consciousness and your true nature. Knowledge in its pure form is *Brahman* (Reality) — i.e. “no knowledge” (as distinct from ignorance) is *Parabrahman* (Supreme reality) for whom there is no sleep, waking or dream.

1976, July 12th

Maharaj:

You have been coming here not to learn new ideas (as in most ashrams) but only to get clear of wrong ideas. I use the idea of God (Brahma, creator) as a soap to wash away wrong ideas (objective ideas and ideas of doer-ship). Everything you get, you get only through this consciousness of *I am*.

What is most important is what you **are**. That determines what you get, and in reality anything you get can be of no use to you. These Truths cannot be taught or given to all and sundry. You cannot tell everyone that God is only soap.

Before I met my Guru I had many objective ideas, which I took to be real. With the aid of my Guru I realized that such ideas were of no use to me. Then I got the knowledge of “God”, which I also realized was of no use to me, and this led me to knowledge of the “Self” (reality), which also I eventually realized was of no value — as my Essence is beyond knowledge.

At the moment, you are seeking knowledge of the self, but you must come to realize that you are beyond it. But first you must get knowledge of the self. Eventually he who gets knowledge of the self disappears in the sea of the Self. A ripple in the sea “knows” itself as a ripple — but when it rejoins the sea the ripple becomes the sea and cannot know anything.

Q: *Who has the knowledge of the Self?*

M: Does he want it typewritten? If I say *Paramatman* (Supreme Reality) and you say “I understand”, it is ridiculous.

Understanding brings silence — not speech.

You must cease to think that the mind will come to understand. *Paramatman* cannot be understood by the mind. It is only a name — and the mind clings to this chain of name and form.

There are no customers for this knowledge I am giving you.

You must become my associate to get it, and then you are a customer no longer.

Most learned people value this chain of name and form, because on this depend their ideas of what they are. You must understand that you are beyond name and form. You must come to your Essence yourself.

My state requires no support; it is self-effulgent (i.e. it requires no 'seer-seen' relationship) — it provides the support for the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, ether), which constitute the visible universe.

What I merely describe in words is not the Truth. These probes must be given in words but they do not describe my true nature, which is beyond anything and everything. *Samadhi* is not my true nature. To say "I was in *samadhi*" is like saying "I had a good sleep". It is a feeling that comes and goes and can only be experienced in memory. All such feelings pass away.

It is not only words, I am actually beyond time. My real nature is indescribable and beyond consciousness. Everything is to be finally discarded including knowledge of the world, God and Self. Only my Guru is my equal; only he understands my true nature. In fact there are *no two* to be equal; both become merged.

1976, July 16th

Maharaj:

This world is an extension of your own consciousness of being. Everything depends on your consciousness of existence. Unless you are conscious you cannot remember; unless you remember (i.e. memory must function) you will not know the world.

“God” is an idea in the mind, which depends on consciousness for existence. Reality can only be one. Each person has a different conception of God. It cannot be that there are different Realities, for the very definition of Reality is that which is Real, that which persists at all times and never changes. That which witnesses all states, God, ideas, et cetera, is the essence which never changes, but is the ever-present witness of change.

1976, July 19th

Maharaj:

In deep sleep, there is awareness (note: awareness but not consciousness) – the feeling “I don’t know anything”, i.e. awareness with ignorance as the object, not the underlying awareness. When you are awake, the phenomenal world appears over the awareness. The only difference is the object.

When I became established in the knowledge of the Self, I realized that I did not have to do anything. I have a servant or a devotee to do things for me, and that servant, that devotee is “God” (*Ishwara* or consciousness of **I am**).

The purest knowledge of me is this *Ishwara*, which actually does everything.

My essence or the real me, myself, does nothing — it is immovable, unchanging Reality.

It was through the grace of my Guru that I learned that only *Ishwara* is doing anything. Wrong identifications with the body-mind complex lead you to the false idea of a *jiva* or individual who acts. When the consciousness of **I am** becomes pure (i.e. simple I AM, not “I am this” or “I am that”) — you become *Ishwara* (God or creator) and the sky becomes your body.

What *Ishwara* (the Lord) does, you do, but your true nature ever remains the same.

Essence, Self, knowledge of Self, and pure Being are all the same, except pure Being is beyond being and non-being. Consciousness can be pure or impure. When impure it is the *jiva* (individual soul) wherefrom duality arises. *Ishwara*, unlimited and unconditioned, is identical to pure consciousness.

1976, July 21st

Maharaj:

Pure awareness does not admit anything of individuality. When consciousness comes, then individuality appears (note: it appears — it is not Reality). It is all a dream within Awareness. Awareness (*Swarupa*) is the sole reality.

Anyone who fully understands this is called an *Avatar*.

In the primal state there is no union with anything:

niryoga = free from yoga

From this comes union of the Self with consciousness. Union with the body through consciousness is false yoga. Consciousness united with the Self is true yoga, however beyond this is the *Swarupa* (Pure Awareness or Reality).

ORDER:

- AWARENESS (or *Swarupa*)
- CONSCIOUSNESS (*Ishwara* – *Tattva*: God, Creator or Consciousness of **I am**)
- BODY/WORLD

The Guru refers consciousness back to *Swarupa* and corrects false identifications.

When you become the pure consciousness (*Ishwara* or God), the guru tells you to go beyond this.

The first and last states of *niryoga* represent reality itself. You must transcend this false union with time (*kala-yoga*).

All yogis are *kala-yogis* — all are subject to time.

1976, July 23rd

Maharaj:

Both *Maya* (illusion) and *Brahma* (God the creator) appear on what I am.

They are superimposed on what I am. The distinctions that you draw from knowledge (e.g. male and female, etc.) are *Maya*, but the knowledge itself is *Brahma*.

Both are only an illusory appearance on (or in) the Reality. When there is no state that comes and goes, that is your natural state. All experience is illusion. If you go from one illusion to another, nothing has happened, no progress is made. If you realize that you are not the body, then “you are”.

But where and what?

I am is the purest form of attribute. Without any attribute it is *Parabrahman* (Supreme Reality). *Brahma* (God or ***I am***) means that “the news” has arrived.

When this “news” has gone, it is *Parabrahman*. That you exist is the primary knowledge.

1976, July 28th

Saprey: *What is the relationship between consciousness and prana? In deep sleep consciousness is not there, whilst prana (breath or breathing) continues.*

Maharaj: *Ultimately consciousness and prana are one and the same. In deep sleep Consciousness is there in a latent form, but does not know the prana (unlike samadhi).*

S: *Doesn't the scientist with his more complete world view, and equipped with his theories of relativity, have a more elevated consciousness?*

M: *The scientist has taken the play of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether) and the three gunas (qualities of dullness, activity and harmony) as firmly established and real and has gone on to make all manner of calculations on this basis.*

I am witnessing this play, which appears on my Essence. For a jnani it is all playing with toys. All knowledge is a mere art or discipline and will not reveal Reality.

The only real and lasting peace to be found is at the Source, which to reach you must go against the current. Of course, you must learn and engage in any art that may be required for your day-to-day existence, but don't think these arts are, or can take you to, the Source. Don't be overly concerned about making a living. After liberation people will supply your needs, even in the desert, while they seek this knowledge from you. Any art or branch of knowledge can be likened to a single ray of the Sun of which there

are an infinite number. Find out the Source of the rays and everything will be perfect.

A *jnani* is like a child playing with a toy car, he doesn't care if it is real or not. The secret is, that as long as you are a body, you depend on the attendant consciousness, which must pass when the body dies. Compare it to the City of Bombay ages hence — when it no longer exists; who is left to know or who can say what it was?

Sit quietly and think about it.

It is all name and form, birth and death. But all this again is only appearance on the Self. When you understand that all is illusion you will not be able to put any name or form to yourself. The knowledge gained from a hundred years of life is not the Truth.

Eight hours of sleep give great peace of mind and rest, but that is simply your original or natural state. It is a most important thing when you decide that you want to know the Self. You cannot hold on to anything, for everything is bound to pass away and only you (the Reality) remain. No concepts, no ideas remain.

Because nothing is excluded from the Self, you can go on totaling up your value forever. Your worth is therefore incalculable.

Male and female is responsible for the whole of creation. They are the two halves of *Prakriti* (Nature or Primal Substance). But *Prakriti* is only a projection on the Self, and is unreal, therefore the two halves are equally unreal, being dependent on an unreal projection. When this knowledge of *Prakriti* becomes one with you there will be nothing to do. The **I am** is your only information and will see to the rest.

1976, July 30th

Maharaj:

Activity will not lead to Self-knowledge. When one knows one's true nature any activity then performed will be "good" activity. Even so, this is only **apparent** activity.

This consciousness of me (**I am**) is still an objective knowledge, i.e. knowledge with attributes. This **I am** consciousness in its purity, having only one attribute, is also known as *Saguna Brahman* (God with form) which is also known as the *Ishwara Rupa* (form of the Lord, God or creator).

This first attribute of **I am** consciousness in its purity is also known as the *Sattva* (harmony) *guna* (element) and from these other attributes (*gunas* or qualities) follow.

First is *Sattva* (purity, harmony), then *Rajas* (passion and activity), then *Tamas* (inertia and darkness). The term *Sattva guna* refers to consciousness. This is **I am** in its purity, also called *Ishwara*. When this *Sattva* dries up, so does reflected consciousness.

Self-love is not really love for the Self — for who is there to know the Self in order to love it?

It is really only love for the *Saguna Brahman*, which arises out of the desire to maintain this consciousness. The very fact that you exist (the feeling **I am**) is the love itself.

The Self does not desire consciousness, as it is ever complete; it needs and desires nothing.

It is the *Sattva* element in you, which wants this consciousness to remain.

You don't know what the Self is, so how do you love it?

Really self-love is the love of the *Sattva*, i.e. the knowledge that “I exist”.

Attributes are only of consciousness, not of you, which is the Essence beyond all *gunas*.

To discard something merely means to merge it with the Self.

1976, August 2nd

Maharaj: *Sat-chit-ananda* (the nature of Supreme Reality; Existence, Consciousness, Bliss) is not an attribute, it is **the Essence**.

The consciousness of **I am** is the first and foremost thing. This feeling (that I am conscious) comes to you only because there is something older or earlier to which this **I am** consciousness appears. It is **that** which is changeless and which gives you the information about the personality, etc. It is the unchanging background upon which the changing personality and universe are appearing. All change appears superimposed upon this changeless substratum.

Q: *Intellectually I understand, but...*

M: Intellect came to you only through consciousness. Things can be conceived of only when **you are**. You don't have to prove intellectually that you exist for it is a self-evident fact. Bliss is enjoyed by this particular feeling of **I am**.

Q: *How can I cease to identify with emotions like anger?*

M: You are not the mind nor the feelings. You cannot throw anger out, it must dissolve into you. Simply don't act on anger or jealousy. How can you be jealous when you are beyond everything?

You don't have to make an effort to reach the Truth. It cannot be

caught. It is what remains after all else has been negated.

Christ came as a wave on the ocean of awareness. The ocean retains no memory of any particular wave. Satya Sai Baba says he remembers his past two reincarnations; why is it that he cannot remember being Christ? Since all incarnations arise out of and return to the same awareness, he should remember.

Once I deny all reality to my own consciousness, what is my concern with the consciousness of others, which is equally unreal?

1976, August 6th

Q: *The mind becomes bored and restless. What should I do?*

Maharaj: Who experiences this bored mind?

Q: *I do.*

M: You are like fertile land. Many things grow over you and out of you, but you are not responsible for what springs out of you. You will still be there like the land when the growth dies away. Similarly the Kingdom remains when the King is dead.

Q: *What can I do about boredom and frustration?*

M: Do nothing, keep quiet and just watch it. The one who experiences always remains, although the experience comes and goes. The one who experiences the mind is the 'Self'.

Q: *Maharaj says strive for freedom, but when I do, I get frustrated at the lack of results.*

M: When you desire and get results, there will be no material change in you.

Q: *But I desire a recurrence of the bliss that I have experienced.*

M: Don't go after it, it is naturally occurring.

Q: *It is natural to want it; the desire rises naturally like the desire for the love of a beautiful lady.*

M: Such experiences are only objective. The bliss of the Self is a natural bliss and cannot be gained by striving. It is naturally occurring.

Q: *In my yoga (Muktananda's Siddha Yoga), there are many signs of progress. I look to them in myself and others and fear that I am not progressing, that my sadhana is empty. Many appear to be in the same position.*

M: Do you yourself get any results?

Q: *Yes. A feeling of love for myself and for others has come over me. I have never loved myself before. The experience went away and the old anger replaced it.*

M: Is it not an experience like watching television? What happened to you?

Q: *My meditations are becoming easier; much less effort is required.*

M: By meditation do you mean the mind becoming silent?

Q: *Yes, this morning the mind was very silent.*

M: When you try to play with the mind and find uses for it, it will not be silent. Why should you aspire for results?

Q: *So that I won't always remain the same, so that I can get closer to the Self.*

M: The Self requires no progress; only the mind seeks change and progress.

Beware of comparing yourself with others, for then you are comparing their minds, not the Self, which is always the same. It is therefore a relative judgment and a projection in the mind of the observer. Find the Essence of you (of what you are) and you will know that the mirror is always clean.

Q: *So I must have faith?*

M: Yes, faith that you are the Absolute Reality. You are using

the mind as you would use a car. You are sitting inside it and looking to get somewhere, but you are traveling away from the starting point (the Self). A guru will place achievements before you and you are all the time trying to achieve these goals. I tell you only that you are **That** (Supreme Reality); there is nothing to achieve.

Whatever is given you in the initial stages by a master will be only a relative truth as you will not be able to receive the truth itself. You have to let go of these relative truths at the appropriate time, especially the ideas concerned with getting and doing. You cannot get the Truth; you can only be it.

You are already That.

Recitation of a Mantra is only for the purpose of getting the *sadhaka* (seeker), to sit for a time with something to concentrate the mind on. There is no truth in it. Perhaps the only benefit of the mantra is to bring you here. Now its usefulness is over.

1976, August 9th

Maharaj:

You must come to understand the meaning of God or *Atma*. True spirituality is to understand the precise meaning of God. As you go deeper into the meaning, into the essence of Self, you will come to understand the meaning of the universe, which is not different from the Self. You are prior to every experience. Any pain or pleasure felt is nothing but the extension of your own self.

A child is born; it is suckled by its mother. If the child bites the mother's nipple and causes pain to the mother, where has the pain come from? The child was born of the mother, so the cause of the pain originated with the mother. Likewise your pain has grown out of yourself. But pain will not affect the Self in any way, as it is only an extension of the Self.

You are all students and I reply to all your questions. To pass the test and win what I am giving you, you must be very alert and pay attention to what I say. You should pay the same attention to the sense of ***I am***; being constantly alert and having your attention focused on ***I am***. The five elements are only an extension of your own Self. You must be fully acquainted with this ***I am*** in order to go inward.

Once you have *vairagya* (dispassion), you know that you are not the body, mind, etc. All that is within consciousness. You come to know that consciousness is not what I am — I am beyond it.

Consciousness is like this candle flame which I witness. It comes and it goes, and it is understood by me. When the consciousness of ***I am*** is pure, it is still an attribute. Like this flame it comes and goes. The various names and forms are only descriptions of this consciousness and I am at all times beyond it.

This interval between the beginning of ***I am*** consciousness (birth and waking state) and until you lose it again (death, deep-sleep

state) is called "time". Time and attributes are not two, but one, and both must pass away.

1976, August 11th

Q: *What is pure ignorance?*

Maharaj: You may not like my answer.

Q: *We'll see.*

M: All the objective world is illusion, together with all that you do in it.

What you do has no effect whatsoever on the world. That you exist (as personality, the feeling or consciousness of **I am**) itself is an illusion, therefore whatever is seen through this illusion cannot be real. All of what I am saying — this whole discussion is illusion. Beyond that you must proceed yourself.

Even if I could tell you more, you would not like it.

To get to the shrine of Shiva, you must walk on Shiva. There is no difference between Christ and a speck of dust on the road; All is *Brahman*. If I went to Chowpatty Beach and told people such things, they would stone me. The essential thing is the consciousness of 'what I am'.

When that is not present, I am not here and no others can be there (either).

All ideas of God and *Lokas* (heavens, hells, etc.) are just that — mere ideas coming from the consciousness of you. Consciousness of you comes and goes but you (Reality, Self) are beyond. Pure ignorance is pure science (*I'ijana*).

The *jnani* says that your very own consciousness (sense of **I am** in its purity) is the only True God. However my *Satguru* (True Self) doesn't even know this. From this God (consciousness of **I am**), all other things emerge, but there is no God in my original state.

Q: *Can a living yogi be a niryogi (free from yoga)?*

M: You got the knowledge that you exist at birth. How long before you got this knowledge were you without knowledge?

Q: *I have no reply for that.*

M: So it is beyond time, space and *gunas* (qualities); it is beyond all. You have rejected this Knowledge and embraced objective knowledge, which is impermanent and the cause of all unhappiness and misery.

Q: *You say, "you have rejected this Knowledge." Who has rejected this knowledge?*

M: That you exist is an illusion; that you exist (as something or someone separate) is the rejection. The nature of *Maya* is that it appears to become diverse and many, but finally it all goes away. You cannot speak of a beginning because it is beyond time.

Your Essence is pure Awareness.

The *Satguru* (Self, Reality) diminishes the effect of this *Maya* or illusion, it becomes smaller and smaller until finally it merges with the *Satguru*. You cannot transcend activity until you return to the Source. That you exist (in the **I am** sense) is the illusion, its nature is to divide and appear as many.

I am *niryoga* (free from yoga). The words and expressions come from consciousness through *chit shakti* (the play or movement of the energy or power of consciousness). I am watching the world emerge. *Maya* is as a witness who gives 'states' evidence' and it is therefore pardoned, it is narrating the story of its own deception.

Q: *Are there then two realities for a jnani, objective and subjective?*

M: I am *niryoga* in *Paramatman* (Supreme Reality). I understand the work of this *Maya* and am the witness of it. *Maya* is described as "whatever is NOT". When you become conscious of 'you' (when the feeling of **I am** arises), you attach reality to the objective world, which is constantly undergoing transformation and change. I know that it is *Maya*.

When I am on my own this *Maya* goes away and I remain in my Natural state.

What I say may sound like the words of Brahma (God the creator) but I have gone beyond Brahma or the yogi state (the state of union), for in my Natural state there was never any separation so how can there be yoga (union) or reunion? I know that it is illusion and that I am beyond and apart from these things. Although you are still experiencing the world in duality, you and the experience are really one.

1976, August 13th

Maharaj:

When Krishna says, "*I remember all my past births*", he means that he remembers **I am** which is the fundamental feeling behind all births. There is no "*I am such and such*"!

Q: *Yet you must believe in having lived before?*

M: The scriptures say so, but I know nothing about it. I know myself as **I am**.

As I appeared or will appear, is not within my experience. It is not that I do not remember. There is nothing to remember. Reincarnation implies *a reincarnating self*. There is no such thing! The bundle of memories and hopes called the "I" imagines itself existing everlastingly, and creates time to accommodate its false eternity: I need no past or future to Be!

All experience is born of imagination; I do not imagine, so no birth or death happens to me. Only those who think themselves born can think themselves reborn. You are accusing me of having been born — I plead not guilty!

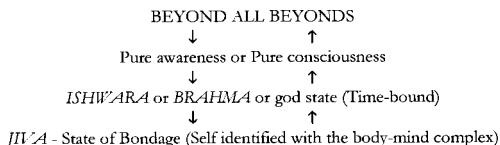
All exists in awareness and awareness neither dies nor is reborn. It is the changeless reality itself.

1976, August 23rd

Maharaj:

The *Jiva* or individual soul — the Self, identifying Itself with the body-mind complex is time bound. Consciousness or god state is also time bound.

Awareness or pure consciousness is a supreme non-dual state and is beyond time and space.



All objective knowledge is bound by time and space, whereas the Self or pure awareness is beyond and unaffected.

1976, August 25th

Maharaj:

Maya (illusion) = the consciousness of 'you'.

The complete negation of the body-mind complex = freedom.

No importance should be given to any thought or concepts arising in the mind.

I am is the seed of illusion. One's parents, mother and father, birth and death, are all *ignorance* born of this ***I am*** seed.

All sciences, arts and objective knowledge are relative and ultimately illusion. Seed of consciousness = love of oneself.

1976, September 7th

Maharaj: When you get the “consciousness of you” do you get any other experience?

Q: *Yes, the world.*

M: When you get this experience of the world, isn't that the consciousness of 'you'?

The consciousness of you has to be there before you can make a statement. The only capital you have is this consciousness of you. It is here and it is stopping here. What do you want from it?

Q: *Everything comes from it.*

M: So you know that the consciousness of you is not permanent (e.g. deep sleep, before birth, after death). The first feeling you get is that consciousness was not there before, then sleep goes away. You are not always in contact with consciousness — that you know.

When you are not aware of consciousness, WHO is not aware?

Q: *Still there was awareness, because I knew there was no consciousness.*

M: Reality is all the time existing. When consciousness was not there, there was no deficiency. Awareness cannot be described; can you accept this fundamental premise?

Q: *Definitely.*

M: Once you have accepted this, what are you seeking in the light of consciousness?

Q: *Nothing.*

M: Consciousness in its pristine purity, appearing on awareness, is *Ishwara* (Lord or God). *Ishwara* is consciousness without identification with the body-mind complex.

Will you accept therefore that you are God?

Q: *Yes, occasionally.*

M: You should know therefore that in this state there is no benefit or loss for the consciousness. Awareness does not require anything. Therefore it is immaterial whether or not there is consciousness. Is it a fact, or are you just agreeing with me?

Q: *It is a fact.*

M: Consciousness of you has appeared on Awareness. Everything depends on this consciousness of you, including suffering. But all suffering is imaginary. Understand this. The *jīva* identification is wrong.

1976, September 8th

Q: *A retired diplomat questioned regarding foreign affairs, whether it had any relationship to individuals? He wondered whether the lives we lead are futile and whether we should retire to the forest?*

Maharaj: Where are you going to go away to? The whole of creation is the actions of energy. Creation is only now, it has no past or future. Only when intellect is present can creation occur. So how are you going to unwind this creation? It is not possible to remove yourself from your world, for you are its center; how will you remove yourself? Where will you go?

You imagine that you are doing this and that, but in reality you are doing nothing. It is an illusion. There is no you to do anything.

Q: *What is the difference between life and death?*

M: On death the blemish of limitation and individuality, suffering, doing, etc. is removed.

Q: *In India all the old values are fast disappearing. Where are they going to?*

M: To Mars? To the Moon? They get dissolved. After dissolution there is Peace remaining.

(The process of) Dissolution and rebirth is beyond time, because it has already happened, it is part of happening. That which is eternal requires no witness, no knowledge, no dependence. IT IS.

The moment you ascribe a name or form to reality, you have

corrupted it. It therefore cannot be reality. Reality cannot be described. When consciousness first comes it is universal. There is no individuality, no body, no mind, etc. The world is, but no body. Then the body appears (through consciousness) and thus comes individuality. *Vritti* is the action of consciousness which creates the body and the sense of individuality.

Remember the infant consciousness, without knowledge of ideas — pure consciousness, whose only body is the sky. The meaning and final significance of the 'Self' (or reality) is you. Try to understand what you Are.

1976, September 20th

Maharaj:

By the grace of my guru, I have realized my Self and I know that I am not the body and am therefore absolutely free. For without the body consciousness there can be no needs and so freedom is always present.

There is no need for *sadhana* (spiritual practice, prayers, yoga, etc.) if knowledge of the Self has arisen. I have realized my Self and know that my mind is the extension of my consciousness, therefore the words coming from my mind are coming from *Begawan* (God).

One must completely negate the body-mind complex and only then are one's words coming from *Ishwara* or God.

The *Ishwara* = the pure or pristine consciousness, but Awareness is beyond the pure consciousness.

No question of knowledge can be in the natural state.

This world appears in the light of my consciousness. What can be given or taken away from me does not affect me in the least, for all is dream or illusion.

In my reflection the whole world is formed. I should not therefore interfere with the (any) actions going on in the world because I am outside of it or beyond it.

Let all those who think they can help the world go ahead, let them build Ashrams, take in disciples and feed the poor. It is all dream and illusion. Nothing ever happened — Reality never ever changed. However if the world still pinches or causes pain then *sadhana* has to be performed.

1976, September 21st

Maharaj:

Everything has sprung from the original word OM — creation — *Vedas*.

Vibration — qualities — *Gunas*.

The heart is the subject or the seat of love. One has to follow one's own path — most others only teach about the objective world.

In *Samadhi* the **I am** is in seed form. The diamond of good fortune is to dwell constantly on **I am** or pure Being and to discard the intellect.

AKASA is pure sky, which is ever free and manifesting in the three *gunas*. The essence of sky is ever pure and unbounded. If you want to live in self-knowledge, live in this sky consciousness, totally unconcerned — trust Guru. Only in dirt will **I am** or consciousness grow, the body is food for **I am**.

Ramana Maharshi and Shirdi Sai Baba gave no lectures as they were absorbed in Bliss of God or Self — goodness, love and compassion flowed automatically and millions were benefited spontaneously.

1976, September 22nd

Maharaj:

By the grace of my Guru, I have been able to get the knowledge of my essence, which creates this objective world, but I know that I am not that knowledge and that I am beyond that knowledge. That knowledge is called by various names: Pandurang, Krishna, Rama, Allah, etc.

I have nothing to be gained from anything spiritual or material. I have complete knowledge of the objective world, but I am beyond it.

Scientists get knowledge of the objective world only — objective knowledge. Even consciousness is objective. The scientist has never turned towards the subject and tried to investigate that. I am also a scientist, but of the Self.

No *jnani* will ever display or show off his knowledge or collect large numbers of followers. If one understands this, what will be one's mode of action? You are conscious of "you", that news is there, who is it that makes you act? It is the consciousness of you that dictates what actions or behavior you will do. The mind is the extension of the consciousness. From consciousness alone we are directed to act.

Consciousness appears on Awareness and acts. Awareness does not act, it is the pure witness. The consciousness of you, or Pure consciousness, is the *Ishtwara* or God or **I am** state, i.e. Universal consciousness. This is not person consciousness. The whole world is created by the consciousness. When this consciousness is limited to an individual it becomes the ego, intellect, mind or *Jiva*.

The consciousness of you makes you do actions, but when it goes, only pure Being remains. The news that you are the witness of all the actions is the *Ishtwara* or *Bhagwan* state. The one who understands this is the knower or the witness. In the highest state

of knowledge no statement can be made such as, "I am this" or "I am that". In the *Parabrahman* state, there is no mind, body, etc.

Physical death should be looked upon as the ocean of happiness for a *jnani*.

Whenever a yogi says, "I am this" or "I am that" know this to be simply delusion, *Maya* or illusion. Awareness is the basis of the three *gunas* (qualities of purity, activity and dullness).

Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and the other great Saints and personalities may appear different, but they emanate from the same changeless Reality and go back to the same. I have understood myself correctly, therefore what need have I to worship anyone else or any fleeting personality?

Any miracle can happen where there is ignorance, or where there is not Knowledge. Anything can happen because it all appears superimposed on him (the *jnani*), in the very light of his consciousness, and he is therefore not interested in them (i.e. miracles).

Helping the world, charity, miracles, etc. — all are illusion. Basically, it is all illusory. Family, friends, and relations are basically delusion and attachments to them should be made as an offering to *Maya* (Illusion).

Happiness and unhappiness will not touch a *jnani*.

The day after my daughter died I was working in my *bidi* shop and one of my guru's fellow devotees asked me whether I was beyond joy and sorrow. I immediately told him about my daughter's death the previous day and that I had never felt any unhappiness whatsoever, for she had merged with the 'Self'. This man immediately became my devotee.

In 1944, my wife died and people came to pay their condolences to me. I simply invited them in with great delight and served them tea and coffee. At the end when she finally died I was present

smoking *bidis*, I felt very happy and clapped my hands, I was totally unconcerned — but for this, self-knowledge is needed.

There is nothing else but benefits which flow from a *jnani*. The Vital breath of a *jnani* is pure and free from all passions, while that of others may not be.

1976, October 27th

Maharaj:

The body-mind complex and all ideas are to be negated. Remain in the awareness: "I am the Supreme Reality". The Pure consciousness or Awareness is formless — *Parabrahman* — Reality. Pure consciousness of the **I am** is Christ Consciousness, but Reality is beyond. When the consciousness of **I am** is pure it equals "God or Christ" consciousness and also equals Nisargadatta Maharaj Consciousness, but Reality is beyond. Other consciousness (that of objects and things, etc.) is impure.

In reality, no statement can be made of "I am" or "I am not", for non-attachment and unconcern are *sine qua non**. There is no lasting happiness in things of the objective world (persons, places and things) as these things themselves are transient or impermanent. In the True state, I do not know whether I exist or not. In the True state, I am not in union with anything. No yoga, for yoga suggests duality or the desire to yoke one thing to another.

One who is seeking the Truth must understand the essence or Reality. One must know that one is the Essence, and that knowledge itself is the Self.

* "without which not" — essential elements (Latin)

1976, November 5th

Maharaj:

Experiences, feelings of well-being, good and bad, high or low, are transitory and time bound, they come and they go. One must always go beyond and realize the ultimate, or their Source.

The talker is different from the talk; similarly, consciousness is different from its witness. The state that you were in before you were born in this body, that is the state that one must hold on to, not to one's present bodily conscious state. One must be aware of one's Source. What was your condition before this body was born?

You will have a great variety of experiences, but the relationship between your death and time must be understood. You must ultimately go beyond time and space. The permanent is Truth, but because of *Maya* or illusion (development of the body-mind complex), we are distracted from the permanent. Awareness is beyond all qualities and experiences. All experiences are time-bound. Be aloof, unconcerned with all these things and experiences. Consciousness is the threshold of Awareness.

The *I am* state has great potency, and from this the manifestation of the universe has taken place. This is the "Godly state" which creates and sustains the world. Because of this most fundamental state of *I am*, everything has manifested, and after this merges in the Pure Awareness, this entire universe with its gods and goddesses, everything from *Brahma* to a clump of grass vanishes as though it has never existed. The first step is to go to this *I am* state, remain there, and then merge and go beyond. Try to sustain this *I am* state, stay unconcerned by thoughts of both good or bad.

If you are still reveling in the qualities of good and bad, how can you go beyond? When you become totally unconcerned with all

thoughts, then you will naturally and automatically go beyond.

Everything (dead bodies, earth, water, fire and air) merge into the Sky. The sky merges into consciousness, and consciousness merges into the Absolute or pure Being or Awareness.

There are millions of visions and experiences present in the seed of the ***I am***, and only by being unconcerned — and giving up enjoyment of them can we go beyond. Aloofness and unconcern is the key.

One should go to the consciousness (***I am***); there the individual consciousness is merged. Only when we enter the body consciousness do we become bound hand and foot but fundamentally, we are free and unbounded. From this awareness the right or correct answer or understanding comes naturally. The most relaxed state is this ***I am*** state — free from all fear and anxiety. The ‘Om’ is consciousness or ***I am*** itself. ‘I’ as an individual is not there in the true ***I am***, for this ‘I’ is present everywhere. It is the ‘I’ of the “I am That” or only pure Being — without being anyone or anything in particular.

1976, November 22nd

Maharaj: All vanity or spiritual practices are the outcome of the identity of the Self with the body. Whatever you have lost or gained through any of these practices is not of any use to You.

What are you doing now?

Q: *Trying to abide in the Self.*

M: Why are you trying to abide in the Self? No effort is necessary. What do you have except the mind?

Q: *Nothing.*

M: Who makes the resolutions or decisions to act? The mind only, not the Self.

What use is the mind? Absolutely none, it must be discarded.

Are you bound by the mind? Or the Self? You can answer only by the mind.

Who are you serving? The mind? Or is it serving you?

At birth were you aware of the birth of the mind? And when?

Is the consciousness different from the mind? When the body came then the mind had arisen. When you became two years old you got the knowledge of the mother, the mind and body.

Before this you had no knowledge of mind or body. That you are “so and so” has been imbibed from the mind of your parents, so the mind wants to know God or Truth. The Saints have given a gimmick to the mind to immolate or dissolve itself — and then what remains is Truth. This is a gradual process. If there is no mind, do you need God? The answer is no.

Are you the mind or are you separate from the mind?

Q: *I am separate from the mind.*

M: Then what do you require?

Q: *Nothing.*

M: Then what are all the austerities and spiritual practices that you have been and are still performing? They are entertainment for the mind only. Mind is not knowledge.

Q: *How to turn away from longing and desire?*

M: Negation of the body-mind complex. Understand the mind and be aware it is not Reality. The mind is the doer. You are not the mind, therefore stay unconcerned. Think “I am a devotee of the unborn.” Avadhut means one who is not born and cannot be killed. You must first understand the mind and then only can you understand that you are not the mind. The Self is action-less; only the mind is the actor.

1976, November 29th

Maharaj: What we talk of, discuss and say here, is the result of the food we have eaten. It is the reflection of the Self. I ask you, are we that? We are not that, for we are the Reality that never changes, or the Self. Total aloofness and awareness of the witness consciousness must be with us at all times.

One must be aware continuously without straining or effort, that, *"I am not the body"*.

All unhappiness is caused by claiming the *doer-ship* of one's actions. Do not claim the doer-ship of actions and all unhappiness will vanish without a trace. Even **I am** is a mirage and is time bound.

You are seeking Truth, in what shape or form or colour do you expect to find it?

Q: *It is inconceivable, without any shape or form.*

M: In that case, where are you? Are you in the body or are you beyond?

Q: *I am everywhere, I am beyond.*

M: Then how can you speak? The seed of ignorance or the causal body is the result of our sleeping and awakening again. Ignorance is still present in these states. The 'Turiya' or fourth state is beyond these states and in this state the seed of ignorance is destroyed. It is a so-called transcendental state.

‘God’ or ***I am*** is the causal body, but it must be remembered (observed or noted) that these again are concepts used for description and are not the Reality. Even ***I am*** is an illusion and it is also the ‘original sin’. Even “I” is a blemish on your dense, massive Silence. The consciousness of ***I am*** is veiled by the use of drugs. Discard them. Be in the world, but know that it is all illusion.

Do not talk to flatter people or to entertain them or to make them feel better — let whatever comes, come from the light within. If you don’t know what to say, say nothing and remain merged in your own pure silence.

Don’t try to judge others or talk about knowledge of the Self by planning or thinking. As far as I am concerned, you are already dead to your body and mind, the light within will guide you naturally and spontaneously. Without the body-mind consciousness you will behave perfectly naturally and spontaneously, without judging or being judged and without planning or preconception.

The Super-mind has no memory and therefore it acts in the true sense. The lower-mind acts through the memory, which means that it is not truly acting, but only reacting.

1976, December 1st

Maharaj:

When you understand the “essence of you”, then you know that all anxieties and fears belong to the world only and are not yours. When you are traveling in a train, you are not moving, only the train is moving. Similarly, everything just happens, comes and goes, but you are the change-less Reality, the witness. The ‘essence’ needs nothing. You can do *sadhana* or anything else — the mind must do something, but know that it is futile and that there is nothing to be gained or lost in it.

My devotees want to celebrate my birthday in April, but I have advised them not to send out any invitations. If people want to come, let them come, if not, then let that be. I don’t want popularity or name and fame or a big crowd to gather. I don’t need anything.

You can help people and advise people, but first be established in the knowledge of one’s essence, and know that it doesn’t matter one way or the other — detachment. For any spiritual knowledge you must be there first.

What is that knowledge? It is a feeling of sky and space and giving it shape and form is one of the first sins. The knowledge of the Self has no attributes and is no-knowledge, in fact it is the Self Itself. The first attribute to appear on this knowledge is the sky, but Self-knowledge is before the sky knowledge. Self-knowledge is beyond and has no attribute and is the Reality. You have identified yourself wrongly with the sky and from then on all other attributes appear — water, earth, fire, unhappiness, desire, etc. (The first attribute is *Brahman* or space or *Saguna Brahman*).

The sky, space, memory, consciousness is nothing but the mind. The world is mind. The sum total is mind and it is also the first attribute or the knowledge ***I am***, but this mind is witnessed by

something, which is the Reality. Mind is *Saguna Brahman* or the first attribute. Once you understand that you are the Witness of the mind, that understanding is the Reality. Mind and the world are inseparable. Mind is the world, consciousness and *Ishwara*, but you **are** before the mind. The world appears on you and in you. In reality there is no division. World is illusion, it never existed. The vision of the mind is the vision of the world. The un-manifested views the manifested by means of the mind.

The un-manifested cannot have company with the manifested, for if it did then the manifested would dissolve or disappear. The manifested is an illusion on the un-manifested. First I know my self, then all other knowledge is in the Universal Mind. You are not the mind, so then let all the actions happen, they cannot affect You.

The abstract cannot be grasped, so we can discard all concepts of the mind, and what remains is the Reality. Whatever reason there was to attain something in life, that you have now lost, so you don't need anything.

1976, December 10th

Q: *Why has the Shakti brought me here?*

Maharaj: Your own will has done it. The *Shakti* that gave you this form has brought you here. That *Shakti* took the form of this body and that *Shakti* is loving this world.

You must find out what that *Shakti* is. The world and all actions are all on account of that *Shakti*, but nobody knows or cares to find out what that *Shakti* is.

The Saints become aware of that *Shakti* through the practice of meditation.

The mind is the instrument we use to find out about that *Shakti*.

The power in you or the Self gives the movement and the actions and the mind is the chief instrument for realizing this Self. This mind is the only instrument available to you, so you have to handle it with love, devotion and kindness, so that it becomes quiet, and your true nature is then able to shine forth. It is only when the mind is quiet that it is able to reflect the Self in Its true glory and effulgence. When the mind is pacified, the Self reveals itself.

Q: *Is it love that makes the mind still?*

M: It is not the love of any object, but love for the Self Itself. When you eat or drink for whose love do you do it? You can understand the love of others, but to understand the love of the Self you must have the blessings of a Guru or the Grace of

God. Then you will not need anything, you will be completely full.

Q: *Is it discipline that brings this Grace?*

M: You are not the body. There is no other God than the one inside yourself!

You must have a firm mental posture of “I am not the body”, and the one that says “I” is the one to hang on to. You must establish yourself for long periods in “I am not the body”. The consciousness that “you are” is witnessed by something in you, and that alone is your “Guru”. Not a particular body. Guru is the sound inside.

Krishnamurti is right in saying that there is no guru. We follow a guru or particular person because our understanding is weak and we need a crutch or aid.

Sat-Guru is your True Self. **I am** is the guru or consciousness in a body. This **I am** is witnessed by the Self in you or *Sat-Guru* which is un-manifested. The guru is the manifested or consciousness. You have to understand this “I” consciousness. When mind is not working, there is no world. Mind depends on vital energy.

If the vital energy or (*prana*) goes, then only the Reality remains and no statement of **I am** can be made, but the Reality is still there. Anything which was never in existence can be negated, but anything that is existing can never be negated. **I am** is a temperature or fever; remove it and you are free.

You can never become wise because you are already wise. Meditation is only for the mind. I do not even think that I am a *jnani*, or that I am particularly wise, for I have no concepts or ideas of anything whatsoever. I don't need tomorrow as I am beyond time and space. Even if many people come to see me I am not the

gainer. I have nothing to gain. I have no connection with, and am completely dissociated from, my mind and body. This is *Samadhi* (Super conscious state), and is my natural state 24 hours a day.

1976, December 11th-13th

Maharaj:

People come to me and ask me with all respect if I would like to accompany them to see a play or a movie, but I know that I shall not get happiness from these things because the bliss or happiness flows out of me or is in me, it does not come from some external object or pursuit. You cannot have both things together, worldly pursuits and spiritual enlightenment. The worldly interests and pursuits have to be gradually left off. That state beyond is bliss, full to the brim, you just have to go beyond the mind.

By the mental repetition of the mantra all the knowledge that is necessary for you will spring forth. All the sages have attained the highest knowledge by the Grace of the mantra alone. The mantra should be synchronized with the vital breath. When the vital breath leaves the body it is then said to be dead. The mantra repetition should become spontaneous and not forced.

The Mantra and the Self are the same. The mantra awakens the Self, which lies dormant within us. It has nothing to do with the body. A *sadhaka** should care for two things only — the mantra and the Self, nothing else. This mental repetition of the mantra awakens the kundalini spontaneously. There is no need of any other method to awaken it. Turia is the support of the other three states — waking, dream, and deep sleep. It is their substratum. If non-apprehension goes away then the duality goes away and Turia becomes Reality and is no longer a state. Consciousness in its purity is Turia (pure **I am**) but I am beyond it and living in (as) the Reality.

*spiritual seeker

1976, December 15th-17th

Maharaj: Mantra is the *summum bonum** of spiritual practice. You ultimately become what you constantly think about. If you feed your mind "I am the Supreme Soul", you will become that. When you practice a *Sattva* mantra (I am *Brahman*), the other *gunas* of *Rajas* and *Tamas* merge into you and the mind becomes transparent. I know my state before I was born so therefore I know Krishnamurti's and everyone else's state. There is no question of equality or inequality in my consciousness as I see everything and everyone as nothing but myself. Repetition of mantra takes one to the pure **I am** state or *Sattva Guna* and from there one merges into the source of all bliss, and then all knowledge that you possess is laid down or surrendered and you merge with the Absolute beyond all name and form. In that highest state the *jnani* without name, shape or qualities is completely unassailable. Any mud-slinging or name calling will not affect him in the least.

Q: *How is one to recognize a jnani?*

M: If one's mind becomes completely still or calm in his presence, then take it to be that he is a *jnani*.

When you go deeply into it, you find that there was never any duality at all. Duality is an illusion. Duality never was, so there can be no question of removing it. *Vedanta* means the end of the *Vedas* or the end of words. When you realize the highest state, then you are beyond words and no words can touch or pollute this state of Being. Before I was born I had bliss full to the brim, but when I was born I got caught in the tentacles of the world.

*the highest good (Latin)

When *nairagya* (dispassion) came upon me, this world dropped away from me naturally and spontaneously. I did not become a *sannyasi* (renunciate), because this contains the blemish of ego. A *sannyasi* renounces the world but it is still there in the mind, whereas it has simply dropped away from me altogether, so I do not have to renounce it.

When you understand your own Self, all the identifications with the qualities (*Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*) will fall away naturally and spontaneously. By association with the sages or saints even the impossible can be attained. One must have implicit faith in the word or mantra given by the Guru, but one must always be honest with oneself. Just to repeat 'I am not the body', and then indulge in all the sensual pleasures is another trick of the mind.

1976, December 27th

Q: *Do past actions and thoughts affect me?*

Maharaj: If you ask from the level of the body, then past actions will affect you, but if it is from the Self level you will not be affected. The five elements (earth, water, fire, air, ether) are not affected by past actions. Your duty is to identify yourself at Soul or Self level. With this Self there will be no memory of being either male or female. Spiritual knowledge is to identify the Self in you (the Reality, the unchanging, the immutable) – to discover it, find it and not be concerned with the body and mind. All the great saints have said the same thing – you are everything (**I am**).

“So-ham” describes your manifestation, where as “aham” (I), describes your person or identity. When you identify yourself and say “aham” (I), you assume the personal existence, but when you say “So-ham” you become the pure or universal existence or consciousness. “So-ham” is the highest state and leads to the pure silence. No aid or instrument is necessary to attain this knowledge or understanding because this Knowledge is Itself the Self.

Q: *What is the essence of initiation?*

M: To establish oneself in that which existed before this creation and also exists now.

Q: *What is the method of this?*

M: Go to the ***I am*** and dwell on this. Because you are at the body level you revel in all these objective things, but if you were to go to the ***I am*** and firmly abide in that, then all these external things will lose their grip on you.

1976, December 28th

Maharaj:

In this world that is born in your consciousness, what do you wish to attain?

There is nobody else but me or my consciousness. This is *Advaita Bhakti* (non-dual devotion) — ***I am.***

This is the highest devotion — to vanish and be lost or submerged in this vast unknown.

1976, December 29th

Maharaj:

Objective happiness is contained within the Self. I have differentiated between transcendental knowledge (no knowledge) and objective knowledge. Only unlearn the objective knowledge, which is obscured or witnessed by the transcendental knowledge.

Transcendental knowledge remains when objective knowledge is unlearned.

You are, and that itself is love. The love that **you are** makes you do all actions, and when this love is manifested for the entire universe it is Godly Love. The basis of all love is that love that **you are**. The principle of **I am** is the fundamental of all love. The consciousness that **you are** is the foremost love, Essence of Self is love. Your true nature is the same, the transcendental love.

When you become manifest then there is duality and you have love for particular names and shapes, but this is not the true love. You have to return to the Essence (the Self) and then alone you are the true Love. When again you have become that Love and you are that living Love, then people will come to your feet and surrender to you.

Self is the Love, Love is the Self. The love between bodies, male and female is there, but it is the formless Self that is behind these bodies, and so it is our own Self ultimately that we love. To quench the thirst for the love of the Self is why we are moving from place to place. Unless the Self blesses you, you will have to continue roaming around. You are loving the Self, not because you are supposed to love It, but because it is your true nature, your very Essence.

All your activities in this world, gaining money, family, friends, possessions is to attain this happiness or peace. Because you have

separated from the Self, you are unhappy and in misery. **The world is appearing in your light.** When you understand this, then you will understand how the illusion of this world has appeared superimposed on your Reality.

In the objective world we are enjoying things and events through our Consciousness (**I am**), which is not itself the Reality. My true state is beyond this Consciousness, and it is not until I become one with my true state that I shall obtain lasting happiness.

In this objective world, one in a million persons tries to get this lasting happiness and become one with the Self, all the rest pursue things in the objective world and are forever in misery and bondage. Once you know the Self, all the objective happiness is contained in this Self, so you then need nothing and don't have to go anywhere. To know the Self in you, love yourself and be in your Self. *Bhakti* (or having love for God) is again duality. The idea or consciousness of **I am** has arisen in the Cosmic Mind and it is only an appearance, but in Truth or Reality there is no idea at all — all cosmology, the five elements, etc. can be discarded. This is given only as a concept to remove all the false identifications.

Because of intuition you get the idea of **I am**, it is prior to **I am** and is the source of the five elements. The real birth of a baby is in the explosion of feeling between the husband and the wife, and then after that they mate and the child is born. Similarly the awareness of the pure existence got the feeling **I am**, and from this seed this entire world or universe was born. From that tiny seed millions of forms appear, yet the pure awareness is birth-less, and although millions of things spring forth from this seed they are still only appearances and there is neither birth nor death in Reality.

1976, December 31st

Maharaj:

You should try to find out that Self or Essence or knowledge for which we are all doing our actions, practices, *sadhana*s, etc. It is for the knowledge of the Self that we are moving about and roaming around the world and undertaking all these journeys to India or wherever.

Just as in nature according to the seasons the trees and plants give various fruits, similarly the consciousness of **I am** is also seasonal. When this consciousness of **I am** goes away, it is called death. We have to find out what happens after this **I am** consciousness is withdrawn or goes away. On this spiritual path many people will try to pray to some God, external or otherwise, but only one in a million will try to find out the knowledge of this Self.

No matter what people may achieve spiritually, whether visions, powers, etc., they are all temporary or seasonal. The first step is to go to the **I am** and dwell there, and from there you go beyond consciousness and no-consciousness to infinite consciousness, and that is the permanent state.

Whatever I talk or say, you should simply listen to it, that is sufficient, but if you think that by going outside you will get or achieve something, you are mistaken. If you want to get something outside, you will have to assume a shape or form with the help of the five elements, but what I am teaching or saying is beyond these five elements. If you become firmly established in the knowledge of what I am telling you, then this will be sufficient for your spiritual sustenance.

All your activities in this objective world are with the help of the mind. When you use the power of discrimination the mind becomes more subtle and pure and capable of reflecting the *Parabrahman* or Reality. All positive assertions leave the mind

automatically, and that mind then that has become still, is itself the *Parabrahman* or Reality. *Parabrahman* is the ultimate state, and it is beyond the notion of **I am**.

In the objective world you get a thought and then you express it by words.

This mind with the aid of discrimination comes to the *Parabrahman* state. The moment you become completely desireless, then for you there are no thoughts and no mind. The mind is illuminated or lit by Reality or pure intelligence.

When you go to the *Parabrahman* state you become completely desireless and silent, and even the thought **I am** no longer arises. There are no thoughts and no mind in that state. For you are all that is, complete in yourself and absolutely desireless.

The mind dwelling in the pure state of **I am** is a very subtle state of purified mind, but Reality is again beyond that. In the **I am** state, you (with the aid of the five elements) assume the shape of whatever you see, or you become the objects of the world. But from the Absolute point of view, the world itself is but a symptom of ignorance. It never existed.

There is no question of coming or going in the *jnani's* state. He may carry on in the world any activities, but he is not involved with any of these activities, as he is outside of them. Take the example of seeing a mirage in the desert. One would not run after the mirage or try to drink the water from it, as one knows it to be simply an appearance or illusion. Similarly when one has this knowledge of the Reality, one does not run after and get involved in the various activities of the world.

I am without any doubts and therefore I am myself "Shankaracharya".

I look like an ordinary man, but I am not concerned with any of this. I have no desires at all. All the activities that are going on in the world neither affect me nor do I find any fault with them. I

know that I can give nothing to the world, nor can the world give anything to me. It appears that I teach people, but I don't even want that. When people come to see me I am delighted, but I don't desire that you come all the time. Whatever happens is all right with me. I am without desires and am no longer involved in the *Lila* or play of this world, and so that is why people come here to see me.

My guru told me "You are the Reality", so I began to dwell on this, and after some time all the concepts and thoughts in my mind about — life, birth, death, happiness and unhappiness, good and evil — vanished from my mind entirely. All the concepts disappeared and I was left unidentified with anything whatsoever. The Consciousness of ***I am*** is the sole capital that you have. Dwell on this and nothing else is necessary.

From where does the ***I am*** consciousness come and to where does it go? This is to be found out. When you were born, what exactly happened — did you desire it, or did it just happen?

Q: *How is it so many people go through this existence and never find out that this ignorance is obscuring the Self or Reality?*

M: Just as the world is created without a cause, there is no reason for it, because it is illusion. It has no beginning or cause. Everything in the objective world exists only through ignorance or illusion. Once you understand your true nature you know that ignorance never existed at all. This is at all times the eternal truth — that you are without name and form, without even the consciousness of your being either a man or a woman, or any modifications of anything whatsoever.

When at the time of so-called death your form goes away, so also will your brain and memory, and you will not have any memory of ever being a form or person. All existence is illusory. Knowing

this, what do you want to achieve in this world? All is emptiness. With this knowledge you are all now bankrupt, all your ambitions to achieve have now vanished. Once you have become bankrupt completely (free from all thoughts and ideas), there will be no laws for you. You will then know that you are not the doer of your actions, and you will then not have any desire to claim any merit for any of your actions, because you are then fully aware that you are not the doer. When you have lost the sense of being a man or a woman, then there is not even any question of having knowledge, which only comes from memory.

Once you get yourself established in pure knowledge, people will worship and follow you, but of course you must be completely established in it. Then all your actions are guided by the Self or the pure knowledge within you. All inner demons and obstructions are killed by this pure knowledge.

1977, January 4th

Maharaj:

Confine your questions and activities to yourself and whatever you find out within yourself will be applicable to all persons. Now you go and see a play or drama of say four hours duration. After four hours the drama is over, but the perceiver of the drama is not over, he remains even after the drama is over. The drama or play is a time-bound event, which means that it has birth and death. But the perceiver has no birth or death — it is the changeless element.

If you imagine that you are a character in that drama, then the moment the drama is over you are dead, you suffer death, but if you do not allow yourself to identify with any character or personality in the drama, then when it is over you have no death and you remain as the eternal witness of the drama — birthless and deathless.

When you wake up from sleep you have the consciousness that is the source of the three *gunas* with the five elements, and with these *gunas* and elements the world is formed — and this is so instantaneously. From this, the intellect is formed from the *sattva* element. We must be at all times firmly aware that we are aloof from that consciousness or drama or play which is time-bound.

Consciousness or ***I am*** is itself a *guna* or quality and it is also time-bound, but this ***I am*** consciousness is the only asset we possess, so we have to use it and exploit it fully so that we can go beyond into Reality, which never rises or sets.

Beingness or ***I am*** itself is time. It is the source of qualities. When this drama is over, e.g. in deep sleep, we rest, and then when we awake the ***I am*** appears and the drama continues — this is the cycle. This physical body is the food for consciousness, but you wrongly mistake it to be Yourself. ***I am*** is your first threshold or

gate, you must firmly establish yourself there and take full advantage of it, and from there it will be fully revealed to us that we are completely aloof from, or a witness to, the activities of the *gunas*, and even consciousness itself.

Whatever you observe you must know that it is not you — you must disown these things and this must be firmly established. That state is a most loving state, a state of the purest love. Getting absorbed in that state, gradually your consciousness will dissolve or set, but you will be still there, but without any apparent awareness or identification with anything whatsoever.

You must remain in that consciousness state. That state itself is like the meditation on your Guru who is in truth formless and nameless — so you should meditate in this manner. Even if you serve your Guru on the bodily level through all kinds of actions, etc., you must at the same time also be fully aware that he is in truth bodiless and formless. You must have full confirmation that You are not the body. This must be firmly felt otherwise it is difficult to pursue this knowledge.

Whatever practical pursuits you have to do in the world in order to earn your livelihood, think only about them and when they are over return to this thoughtless, formless contemplation of **I am**. Whatever activities you have to do, carry them out — but remember that You are Godly and completely untarnished by these activities. When you are in this *Ishwara* state, all these activities in the world will go on spontaneously. When you become established in this Godly state even the thinking you will not have to do. When you surrender all these plannings and deliberations and remain in the thoughtless state, everything you need will be provided for you.

There are no different levels here, they don't apply to you.

Consciousness starts with *gunas*. When the universe merges into itself, the question of being a man or woman is not there. I am feeding you like a mother feeds her child. Others will not say this, but instead they will tell you to do some practice or a method, etc.

I have no desires and that is why I am able to feed you like this. Even the desire to live or die is not with me. There is no question of worthiness or unworthiness for me, for I don't want to commercialize myself by giving any practice or method or by gathering a big crowd.

Accidentally, this consciousness appears on the pure Awareness. The Guru tells you — go back to the source of your consciousness. Even in a tiny seed the huge Banyan tree is contained. You have to go to that seed, that beingness of **I am** and then realize truth from there. For a *sadhaka*, the only thing I will tell you is to go into the fragrance of **I am** and discover your true nature. I will not tell you, come on and demolish this building and do some social work for the poor, etc.

I will not involve you in the play of the *gunas* or the qualities, as these things will only take you away from your Self.

I am giving you subjective knowledge, whereas others will fill you only with objective knowledge. In all perceivable objects, the highest is the Self. In that process of understanding the highest Self, you should become one with that, be that, and only then will you be firmly established in the state of witnessing — then you will be able to truly witness the world as objective. The thing to be observed is your consciousness which contains all the *gunas* and elements. Your Guru is your consciousness, and everything should happen spontaneously through your consciousness.

Even your scratching your foot you will consider to be done by your Guru or consciousness, and not having been done by your 'Self. Your consciousness is the essence of your world, without which there is no world.

1977, January 5th

Maharaj: Do you know that entity in you which got the benefit of your yoga practice?

Q: *I don't know now, but I will know in the future.*

M: Then these things, these yogas and practices are useless unless you know the entity who got these benefits.

Q: *I came to India to meet Baba Muktananda and I am not completely satisfied with the Siddha Yoga path.*

M: In what form is Baba in you?

Q: *In my mind or Self.*

M: You should know Baba as being *Parabrahman* or Reality. If you have understood Reality then you would need nothing. The consciousness that “you are” is sustained by the food you eat. Consciousness in its purity is the *Ishwara* or God, but you are not that, and you are the witness to that. Guru is the Self in you and is greater than *Ishwara* or Lord. Guru is not the physical person. The forms of the Lord are impermanent. God only appears — he creates the world, sustains it and destroys it and merges or disappears into the witness or the unborn reality.

Q: *The yoga of jnana and the yoga of kundalini seem to be different?*

M: Are you sure there is a difference?

Q: *It seems so. I don't see the role that the kundalini plays in the Jnana Yoga?*

M: The main difference is that *kundalini* is an objective thing, whereas *jnana* is subjective.

Q: *Kundalini brings you to the same place, we are told.*

M: *Kundalini* is objective, and whatever you perceive is objective.

Q: *Ultimately it transcends the objective world.*

M: *Jnana* is Knowledge in the Knowledge. *Kundalini* believes in birth, the body, the world, evolution, etc., whereas *Jnana* tells you what is birthless and deathless. (Ed: Essence knows, while mind only believes)

Q: *Did Maharaj not have any kundalini experiences during the course*

of his Sadhana?

M: Yes! For me during *sadhana* I had many experiences, but I never became involved in any of these. *Kundalini* involves the body, but it is my knowledge and fundamental belief that I am not the body, and therefore whatever experiences there are I am not concerned with them. My path is the path of Knowledge where I give no importance to any experiences.

Q: *These experiences must have some value?*

M: They have only relative value and no absolute value. When you don't have the consciousness of **I am**, do you have any problems?

Q: *No!*

M: Since you want to know the final truth, the birth and death I don't accept, so if Baba Muktananda is birthless and deathless will he bother about *kundalini*? So in the final analysis you don't need it, so why is it to be taught? All yogas and practices come through the consciousness of **I am** only, which is itself an illusion.

Whatever is happening in this illusion, yoga, *kundalini*, or anything else, is relative and time-bound. Why do you bother about all these yogas, instead of trying to know your original state, which is without any attributes?

I negate all the Upanishads, and I don't accept the Scriptures because all these things were written with the attribute of **I am**. They don't describe my true state, which is attribute-less and beyond words and concepts. They may point to my true state but they don't reach it as I am beyond all relative events. On the *Jnana* yoga path one knows that one was always free, so if a person has this knowledge, then he will not follow the other paths of *bhakti*, *kama*, *kundalini* yoga, etc. To know that this is not what I am is true renunciation. When you become what I am, you automatically reject everything.

1977, January 6th

Maharaj: The consciousness of **I am** is sustained by the food you eat. The nature of this Self is love. So you are trying to make the Self happy by so many methods and systems, which are really only taking you away from your Self. The consciousness of “you are” is like an innocent child, but the moment it identifies with the objective world the child immediately loses its innocence. So all these things in the objective world cannot give you the true or lasting happiness, so one has to return or turn back to the inner-Self or Reality of one’s Beingness.

The consciousness of “you are” is like — unto an innocent child when it looks back at the *Parabrahman* or Reality. When the *Parabrahman* looks at the consciousness of “you are”, just by looking at it, it becomes pure and happy. The love of the body, and the love for survival or the perpetuation of the **I am** itself is the basis for all of our actions.

That which is in the body is love itself. The knower or witness of this love is the Supreme Reality — that which is the witness without being involved. The moment you start with the consciousness of **I am**, the whole thing of division is started.

Q: *How do you escape from all this turmoil?*

M: The turmoil of the mind can be quieted down by the use of the *mahavakya* (“great saying”) or mantra given by the guru. The separation or division that has taken place becomes dissolved when the mind is in complete silence. At this time the mother and the child meet and when this happens, the bliss and joy that arises is indescribable.

He is then the King of the whole world, the drop merges into the ocean and the whole ocean is contained in the drop. All your formulations of the mind and the world have to be abandoned. The Absolute is formless and nameless.

There is a triad, *jiva* (your consciousness), the world, and *Brahman* or Supreme Reality. You know the first two, your consciousness and the world but you do not know *Brahman* or Reality. When the false or illusory division between the world, mind and consciousness disappears you become what you are.

(Ed: Paradox for mind because you are what you have always been)

Q: *Is the mind an instrument? Do you use the mind to understand?*

M: Mind is only the instrument for everyday living, but not for understanding the true Self. The basic fault is that you identify yourself with the body and mind.

1977, January 7th

Maharaj: Nobody in the world will give you completely naked knowledge like this. I keep nothing back.

I will give you the sweet part of this knowledge. You have understood the knowledge of the Self, but it is not the Truth as Truth cannot be expressed. My guru gave me a *sadhana*, and whatever I got from my *sadhana* I offered it back to my Guru. The things that he gave me were of no use to me so I offered them back to him. If anyone attacks me they attack my Guru. But no one can attack or destroy Me because they can never have the knowledge of Me. Whatever my guru taught me I gave it back to him for I always knew I was not the entity which he taught.

So whatever I say is not the Truth, because words are not with Me, they have not been with Me, and can never be with Me. Ultimately, Guru is talking through me now, but in my true state I cannot talk.

Whatever I have understood is not Me, that is all I know.

I am not a saint, a sage, a *sadhu*, God, or Guru or anything else, I am nobody.

Q: *What is the relation between the Guru and the mantra?*

M: If the Guru is not there, where is the mantra? What do you mean by guru?

Q: *Guru is the complete merger between subject and object. Can all the techniques of yoga, meditation, and mantra reveal the Self?*

M: When all these activities are gone through, then you see the Self. They lead ultimately to the Self.

Q: *Is the Self conscious of the Self by Itself?*

M: When you understand by words, yes it is. The Atman is self-luminous, so there is no question of knowing itself by itself. Birth is in your town only.

When the child is born, he is born with ignorance or original sin, for he immediately begins to see things separate from himself, e.g. mother, father, etc. What is the Self? Why have I engaged in all this enquiry about the Self? Why have I come here?

Are all my doubts cleared? If so, only then can I leave. With the birth this world has come. This world is resting on nothing. It rests only on **I am** and it is in the mind only. From the absolute angle **I am** is an illusion. If you believe in birth it is only like playing a game of cards — it is of no use at all.

There is no place or thing that is holy or unholy, it is only made that way by the faith of the people who visit these places. All this objective world is resting on, or existing because of, ignorance. All this objective world with all this light (the sun and stars, etc.) is nothing but ignorance and no Pundit will accept this, but I accept it. When you come here I give you this knowledge so that wherever you go from here, whatever activities you do, you will know that there is nothing to be gained from them. So with this detachment you can do anything.

Food, sleep, and procreation, this is happening everywhere in the objective world whether you are a Christian, Hindu, or Muslim, but all these experiences are through the consciousness of **I am**, which is itself an illusion. All your activities in the objective world are based on these three things. Don't keep any doubts in your

mind and so you should keep coming back here until you are completely satisfied. Don't think that I am your guru or anything else, but just treat me as your friend and come here.

1977, March 31st

Maharaj:

The entire objective world rises and sets with this consciousness of *I am*. This consciousness has the infinite power to become whatever it wants to become, but this again will only be so in the dream and not in Reality. For in Reality nothing has ever happened or changed at all. You see we don't have to learn anything, as a matter of fact we have to unlearn everything, de-condition ourselves completely and let go of all concepts and ideas, for all words and ideas are not real.

1977, April 5th

Maharaj:

We don't like the idea of death only because of our false identification with the objective world. In the objective world we have value only because of the objects.

When we lose the value of objects, we lose the value of the objective world.

The entire objective world comes from or is manifested with this consciousness of ***I am***. So the objective world is nothing but a sport or art of this ***I am*** consciousness. Your true nature is beyond this. There is no intrinsic value in this consciousness of ***I am***, except to know and realize its illusory nature.

There can never be any change in Reality or that which is Real. Once we have accepted the definition of Reality as being that which persists or is at all times the Same, then we know that Reality can never change. The objective world and the consciousness of ***I am*** (in deep sleep there is no feeling of ***I am***) is constantly changing, so from this we can infer that whatever changes is only an appearance and not a Reality. The entire vast universe is therefore an illusory thing — it is of no value to You. It has no intrinsic value. Even then it does not have to be destroyed or overcome, it simply has to be seen for what it is — an unreal appearance.

Can the unreal affect the Real? The unreal from the absolute angle has never existed at all — it is a perfect illusion — it has never happened at all. How can something that changes (the world or universe) come from or out of Reality (that which never changes) — it is absurd. It is not possible. Therefore this universe in truth has never existed at all. It was never created at all. No Pundit or religious teacher or scholar will accept this.

Study the nature of this ***I am*** consciousness. Once you understand the nature of this consciousness and that it is untrue, then all your search is over, there is no more effort required. When you awake from the dream you no longer take it as real, you realize that it is only a dream. As long as you have an attribute you have a desire. From where has this attribute come? It has come from this consciousness of ***I am***, but this again, has only appeared on your true State, which does not change.

All the activity in the objective world is your own activity.

I am consciousness in its purity is the creator of the world, it is the objective world. Knowledge is activity — is the world, etc. Any knowledge, art, or science, comes through this ***I am*** consciousness. You can become perfect in any art, skill, or science but this is still ultimately all false or impermanent, for the ***I am*** itself is a false or impermanent thing. I cannot really tell you the story of Myself for It cannot be expressed in words.

1977, April 7th

Maharaj: Are you of any use to Yourself?

Q: *No! To Myself I am useless, for there is no "I" as such. My personality and body-mind complex are unreal, they are only an appearance on my true state which is ever-complete and needs nothing.*

M: Correct!

There is happiness and unhappiness in this world only because this consciousness of **I am**. This consciousness of **I am** is the world. With the touch of this **I am** consciousness, this world comes into existence. Without the **I am** consciousness you are untouched or absolutely pure. This consciousness of **I am**, there is no reason or cause for it, it has just simply appeared.

It comes and goes. It is impermanent.

So how did I come to call myself or know myself as *Siddha* or accomplished? It is because of my knowledge or firm conviction that everything exists because of me, everything including this world depends on me, and not vice-versa.

Q: *In I Am That, Maharaj is saying constantly to be silent, be quiet and be still?*

M: In the initial stages it is difficult and it helps to remain silent and still, but afterwards even to be quiet and still is not necessary.

I say, have respect for the Guru or God. And who is the Guru or God (the *Ishwara* Principle)? The **I am** consciousness in its pristine purity is the Guru or God — Once you have respect for this, it will reveal all the necessary knowledge to you and you will then understand that You are beyond this “I” consciousness.

You have to suffer and enjoy the consequences of this **I am** consciousness, there is no choice to it at all.

Whatever I did not have before the birth of the **I am** consciousness is going to go away at death.

In truth the **I am** consciousness was never there, so when it goes away what do I lose? Do I die, or do I remain what I ever have been? There in That state, there is no “God” — no sense of separateness at all, no **I am**.

Without the intellect you know, or you are, the true state. But as soon as the intellect comes into play it is the operation of the **I am** consciousness.

My true state is always without this **I am** consciousness — so if you live with this Knowledge, you won't be always thinking about death and contemplating death, and hence you will live longer physically as your mind and body will be free of unnecessary tensions, thoughts and beliefs.

To understand this knowledge you need only a very pure and simple faith. I am not the result of any union between human beings, my true state is not born at all, for how can Truth or Reality change or undergo birth and death?

If it does, it cannot be Truth. How to use this power of discrimination?

Lord Krishna said these same things 5,000 years ago. Where is Lord Krishna now? And what happened to that time 5,000 years ago? Where is it? It has gone, it has vanished, so why bother about all this, what the Scriptures have said, etc. Your true state is

beyond this. Unless the knowledge of **I am** or Guru's grace blesses you, you will not be able to comprehend your true nature.

Even this **I am** consciousness does not really need anything. Your true state is beyond this **I am** and it has no needs, no requirements at all. In the time of Krishna there were also good people and bad people just as there are today, now they have gone. Where have they gone? Where did they come from in the first place? In truth there was no cause for their appearance, and if there is no cause there is no effect also. They have never existed in reality at all, they were only an appearance on the Reality. Existence itself is only an imagination – similarly with all of you here now listening to me. You should use this power of discrimination always, and find out in truth whether you really are a person. If you truly inquire you will find that you were never a person at all. Even the “Great Cause” or Creator (*Ishwara* or God) finally is only a word. The “Great Cause” is the **I am** consciousness.

1977, April 8th

Maharaj:

When you are an individual you have certain needs, but when you merge into the Self you no longer have these desires. When man becomes a *jnani* he loses all sense of being an individual and he moves about freely without any hopes or fears, he becomes completely fearless and without any desires. It is not the ears that hear or the eyes that see; the body by itself is insentient, it is the Self within that gives the feeling of being alive to the body. The body is only the instrument of the Self, it is not the Self.

So long as you have the body consciousness or idea you will be subject to happiness and unhappiness, but if the body idea leaves you, even now while you are in the body, the happiness and unhappiness will also go, and you will be left with your true nature which is at all times complete and has no needs.

For the realized man there is no such thing as body, mind, intellect, etc., for all these are only ideas. I don't even have the idea that by giving this knowledge I am doing good to the world. No such ideas of good and bad; no such distinctions and motives are with me. I am completely free of all false notions and ideas.

1977, April 9th

Maharaj:

At first you thought that your experiences were coming from the world, but now are you convinced that the experience of the world comes from you? You get the experience of the world through you. So if you understand this, then there is no choice to it, the experience of the world comes and goes. So what profit or loss is there in this? What do you want to attain in this world?

The experience of the world comes through the consciousness of *I am*. In the dream-state you have the illusion of being awake (you feel that the dream is real while you are dreaming, the consciousness of *I am* is operating), but what is illusory in this? The consciousness itself is illusion. That we are sitting here discussing and talking at all, that itself is illusory.

That we are acting and talking here is only because of our consciousness of *I am*. This consciousness of *I am* is illusory and completely unreal to the *jnani*. Ultimately, until you can leave off completely the feeling of personality, you will not be able to fully comprehend the Absolute Reality. You are bound by this sense of being a person, even though this thread of a personality may be very thin, however, even then this bondage of personality is ultimately illusory.

You are deluded into thinking that in the normal waking-state that you are awake — in truth you are fast asleep, and until you awake completely into the Reality, full comprehension of the Reality will not dawn for you. Even consciousness itself is only an idea. The moment that you have awakened from the sleep of ignorance, or the dream of this world, at that moment, you are immediately complete.

All I am doing here is waking you up, calling “wake up, you have been dreaming!” That you are awake and are a person in a world,

when you have any sense of personality like this, you are quite obviously fast asleep and dreaming, although you falsely feel that you are awake. True awakening is to awaken to Reality and to know that you are not a person, and never have been a person. A person has needs and desires, but the Reality needs nothing at all, for this is your true state.

This **I am** consciousness is great for it creates this vast world, but You are greater, for You are the Reality behind and beyond this **I am** consciousness. You have come to me to ask me something and I have told you that “You are the Reality”, so remember this, stick to this and live by this knowledge. You are the Reality. You are the *Parabrahman*, so meditate on this and remember this, and finally the idea that “I am *Parabrahman*” will also leave you.

It is not because I tell you, that you are the Reality. Even if I don't tell you, still you are the Reality. It is there with you at all times, a self evident fact. Whatever powers or *Siddhis* come to you from this knowledge, don't become involved with them, negate them immediately and remain merged in your true nature. Do whatever you want in this world, but don't lose your Identity — that is that you have no identity at all.

So with this knowledge, when I die, what happens? What I never really had goes away, what was never mine leaves me, so what have I lost? What really happens to me with the physical death? Nothing at all! Do anything you want to in this world, but be with your Self, your True nature, don't forget It, be with It, dwell with It. It is bliss Itself, it is not the nature of bliss.

When you dwell in the **I am** consciousness in its pristine purity, you may dwell in the knowledge of arts and great powers, but don't become a slave of any of these arts or powers, for they are on the objective side, in the objective world which is ultimately illusory, and will not take you to your True nature, which is beyond the objective world.

Don't be always thinking in terms of personality and body, etc., but rather dwell with your formless reality. The one who witnesses

the thoughts and ideas is without body, mind, thoughts, etc. Don't sign your own death warrant by saying and thinking that "I am going to die". Don't entertain such false and misleading thoughts.

I have been talking and discussing so many things here, and if you feel that you still have to go and get spiritual advice or instruction from some other teacher, then you have not understood anything that I have said here. Do not unnecessarily run after or make friends with outside things or persons, but rather remain with your own Self, nature or Reality. The idea of birth and death is nothing more than a drama or play, it has no basis in Truth, don't bother about it — it is illusory, all these ideas are illusory!

1977, April 11th

Maharaj:

The consciousness of ***I am*** has a little distance from the True state, hence it is unreal, for whatever is away from the True state or the Reality is unreal.

You have to understand what is Real and what is unreal. *Atman* or Self ultimately is Reality.

Something in you knows what is Real and what is unreal, and THAT is the Reality. You come to know that whatever experience you may get, that You are still beyond that. You say that the consciousness of ***I am*** is in the body, but the body is known to be impermanent or unreal, hence this consciousness in its pristine purity is fully manifest (i.e. it has the entire universe as its body). It has only one attribute, and that is ***I am***, but without name, shape or form. Yet it is my true state, which understands this and is beyond this still.

Your existence is before that of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, ether), hence whatever actions that happen in the objective world, they don't affect your true nature in the least. Dwell on your true nature and don't bother about the objective. Whether it is real or unreal, don't bother about it. Just try to constantly dwell on your true nature, which is beyond time and space.

The cosmology can be given, but you should understand that you are at all times beyond it, and that you are there even before the formation of this world. Different theories of creation or cosmology are given by different religions, but you should not be unnecessarily concerned with them, for your true nature is always existing and immovable, otherwise, how would you be able to understand any cosmology?

There is something in you, which understands the theory of creation, and that something is your true nature, which is at all times existing even before the world and after it. This, your true nature, is the unchanging background or Reality upon which everything else including the world appears and disappears.

God is an idea, and this idea you have wrongly taken as a truth. God (***I am***) is time-bound. He is only an appearance on our true state. You, as the Reality, exist first, and only then does the idea of God arise.

You have gone about worshipping various different Gods, etc., but when you come to me I have told you that the “I” consciousness itself is the “God principle”. So you don’t have to go to any other God or person, but simply understand that the ***I am*** consciousness in you in its pristine purity is itself the God (the creator of the universe). So if you want anything, pray to this ***I am*** consciousness in yourself.

Understand that whatever God you are worshipping in whatever temple or church you may go to, that you are at all times beyond it. Christians say Christ came 2000 years ago and saved the world, but what happened to the world before Christ? Was it not existing in the same way? Similarly with Mohammad, what happened to the Muslims before him, were they not still existing the same? So it is really only the nature of the consciousness or time to save the world.

Lord Krishna declared that he himself was the Reality, and he told the story of himself. Everyone began to worship him instead of finding out their own Reality, which is also the reality of Krishna. Krishna was the only one who tried to find out his own true state, and I also have found out my own true state, and I know that Krishna’s story is my own story.

I am telling you that you yourself are the Reality, but even if I don’t tell you, still you are the Reality. That which without the grace of anyone or without dependence on anyone exists — that is the Reality of all. My own private world exists through the

consciousness ***I am***. How can this vast universe exist in this tiny speck of ***I am*** consciousness? It is not possible, it is ultimately unreal, so I won't accept any so-called great man or yogi, for they exist only in my own consciousness, which is not a real or lasting thing.

Whatever Lord Krishna has said, I have told the same, there is no difference. Ramana Maharshi, Krishnamurti, and others, have made so many sacrifices and penances and people know them well, but I have done nothing and still people come to listen to me. You people call me wise but in truth I don't have any idea that I am wise at all. I have found out nothing for my state is beyond knowledge, and at all times is without knowledge.

The idea of Krishna comes only with the consciousness of ***I am***. I am really nothing and nobody. I exist, but without any identity whatsoever. My true state is at all times without any support, needs, or requirements. Other great men have done so much penance and *sadhana*, etc. I have done nothing and yet people still come here to hear me and praise me. Birth and death itself is the play, the drama — it is not Reality.

1977, April 13th

Maharaj:

By coming here you seem to get something and that something is to find out what you are. You have found out that in reality nothing is going to happen to you or affect You. Once you have found out what you are, you know that nothing is going to happen to You at all. You know that everything happens because of you and not to you.

You have understood that the authority or the power is with you. The Self is in you. When you interview yourself, you find out that the interviewer and the interviewed are the same. What was the net result of it all? There was no gain or loss, it was only a matter of thinking.

Whatever you have (nationality, name, form, sex, etc.) is not going to remain with you. You must be able to interview yourself and use this power of discrimination to realize that nothing in this objective world is going to remain with you. Even God (*Ishwara*, the Lord or creator) is time-bound. Even He will not remain. You have the knowledge of the Self now, but what is the net result, profit or loss of this? It is nothing. Your Reality is not added to or diminished thereby.

You may meet another Guru who will try to give you some *sadhana* or technique, but you will not be taken in by this. You will immediately know that it is useless and you will spontaneously reject it, for you know that your true nature, your Reality, needs nothing at all. Why should I bother about the mind of Rajneesh, when even my own mind I don't believe in?

I know the source of my own mind and therefore I also know the source of every other mind, and I know that my mind in its purity is the *Brahman* (God), but I know that this also is only an idea and that I am beyond even this.

The consciousness of **I am** ultimately is the same as mind. The whole vast universe is really in this mind or the consciousness of **I am**, which is an appearance only. I know that my mind in its pristine purity is the *Ishwara* (Lord God or Creator), but I am different from it at all times.

What is the nature of this **I am** consciousness I know, and I know that I am different from this and that I am beyond this. I know my true position, so why do I require more and more activity and play in this illusory world? Why unnecessarily create further illusion within the illusion? Rajneesh gives so many techniques and methods, but are these really the methods to reach the Reality which is ever with us? Surely, all that is needed is a correct understanding of my true nature, and not all these puny methods and techniques.

My true position is at all times beyond this consciousness of **I am**. Whatever comes out of this “I” consciousness (mind, body, world, etc.) — when I know that I am not this, why should I depend on any mind, method, idea or technique which comes out of this illusory consciousness? I am never thinking, aspiring, or desiring anything. I have no ideas at all. If two people come to hear me or two thousand, it will not truly matter to me for I have no ideas of gaining or losing anything.

I know Rajneesh is only an illusory mind or personality, so why should I bother about what his mind is doing or saying? I know I am nobody, I have no sense of any personality, so consequently I need nothing and have nothing. The consciousness of **I am** is the instrument in the body, but in truth it has no shape, form or colour.

The sex enjoyment between man and woman, that is the main thing around which everything revolves in the objective world. It is the enjoyment around which every thing else is based, but even then it is only a feeling and not a Reality. Some people consider that the sex act performed with anyone else but one's own spouse is immoral, and other people consider that *brahmacharya*

(abstinence) is the highest virtue.

The real *Brahmacharya* is the *Brahman* (Self) who on looking back sees that the **I am** consciousness itself is immoral or an illicit thing. The birth of every one of us is illicit, for in reality it is illusory. Everything, which I see or perceive is with the aid of this consciousness of **I am** which is impermanent and illusory, so why should I be concerned with this?

Speaking to an Australian couple: "Now you are a couple, husband and wife, but I know that you have never existed (as a personality) so why should I be concerned if you become three, four or five? — If you have one, two or three children? When the consciousness of **I am** is there, then there are so many things and persons, but when it goes away there is nothing and nobody, so what is the true nature of this consciousness? You are no-thing, but you are not nothing."

You have to completely leave the body sense if you want to attain or realize this Reality, for in Reality there is no such thing as the body-mind sense. What will you meditate on when you know this? When there is nothing but the Self, what is left to meditate on?

1977, April 15th

Maharaj:

What is the use of wearing trinkets, bangles and beads, etc.? Your true nature does not require anything. You have to find out that the most important thing is this consciousness of ***I am***, and only through this is any importance given to anything else, for without this consciousness of "I" there is nothing there at all. Try to find out yourself, what you are in Reality, then you will know that you need nothing.

1977, April 18th

Maharaj:

You say that you are the observer of everything that happens and of everything that you see, but what is that observer, what is the identity of the "I" who observes? Is it not illusory? You have identified with so many things in this objective world, and you are pursuing so many different desires and inclinations, and so moving about from place to place trying to obtain happiness, but this activity without understanding will bring you nothing but unhappiness. Try to find out what you truly Are — for only in That is there lasting fulfillment.

This objective world is not your 'True Home' — that is why you are feeling unhappy. The underlying source of all this objective world is your true home, so return there and be full, forget the world altogether even while living in it. The deep-sleep state is almost equivalent (close) to your 'True Home'. Deep-sleep is greatly relaxing and refreshing, because you more or less return to your true or original state. In this state there is no "I" consciousness present and no knowledge of personality at all, for the personality has more or less dissolved or merged into your original state.

Yogi is not a personality. The true yogi is the one who has swallowed this **I am** consciousness and merged it into himself, he is then a *Maha-Yogi* (great yogi). As a matter of fact, it is only through your own *Maya* (illusion or delusion) that you see this world, but even then *Maya* is only a feeling, an appearance, it is not a Reality.

1977, April 22nd

Maharaj:

Whatever you “are not” (body, mind, intellect, etc.), you have accepted and actually stolen as reality and because of this, there is some fear. However, when you know for certain your true state, you will be able to move about anywhere without fear. If you can really and truly see yourself as you are, then there is no more fear of death or anything else.

Whatever you have (and you have a type of false courage), you say “my body, my mind”, etc., but in reality they are not yours at all. You have claimed ownership of things which are not truly yours. You are at all times different from these things. In the dream-state someone says something to you or tells you something, but neither the person who tells you nor the person who listens is real, for both are in the dream only. That is exactly the situation here with us at the moment. I am the teacher and you are the listener, but this is so only in dream or illusion. When you awaken fully, there is neither teacher nor taught.

Once I have realized the nature of this consciousness of ***I am***, how it has appeared on my true state and that it is truly only an illusory thing. When I have fully known and realized this, then the consciousness of ***I am*** (within which is contained the vast universe), dissolves or merges into Me. In the light of this consciousness of ***I am***, this vast universe is formed, but the light of this “I” consciousness is nothing but a reflection of the light of the true state or Reality.

The consciousness of ***I am*** is the world, and there is nothing wrong in seeing or witnessing this world. The mistake comes in only when you take it to be real, as we almost all wrongly do. After you emerge into the waking-state from the dream-state, you automatically negate the dream and say it was unreal, it was only a dream. Similarly with this waking-state in which we perceive this

vast universe with all its stars and planets, etc., it is also only a dream, so I say, awaken to your own Reality. Wake up! Stop dreaming, that is all.

This world has truly never existed at any time whatsoever, it was never really created, it is a dream! So know this, realize this only! That is all. Once you fully imbibe this understanding, nothing more is necessary, and no more questions or doubts can or will possibly arise. Can anything be so simple, yet so sublime?

Satya Sai Baba says that he is an incarnation of a certain earlier Sai Baba of Shirdi, and he says that he has come to redeem the world, and so I respect him for this, but I know my true nature or position in which there is no world to redeem.

He has come to redeem an illusory world, so I say good luck to him; in that sense I respect him. So ultimately we are here discussing things that have never happened.

Do you understand this?

Afterword

In the eleven months that I spent with Nisargadatta Maharaj in 1976-77, I would usually visit him twice a day, four or five days per week.

I stayed in a very small hotel room in Bombay during this period. I started taking notes in my own version of shorthand while the discourse was fresh in my mind and I would rewrite what I heard more fully and clearly when I returned to my hotel room.

In retrospect, my association with Nisargadatta was the 'turning point' of my so-called life. Through the seeds that he planted, those priceless 'seeds of consciousness', I have come to realise that I am the truth and that I always have been and always will be. The truth is that nothing has happened at all – everything is that Non-Dual Absolute.

So even though I am moved to share my recollections with you, the reader of this, this account of my life's experiences is ultimately a story, a concept. So that having been pointed out, let us return to those wonderful life changing events of the late 1970's.

Nisargadatta used to have *puja* (worship) with *bhajans* (religious chanting) performed twice a day, there in his small upstairs loft, at 10th Lane Khetwadi, a suburb of Bombay. Maharaj himself used to take part in the worship. He did not insist or invite me to attend these sessions, perhaps because I had already spent 3 and a half years performing similar practices as a devotee of Muktananda at his Ashram in Ganeshpuri, 80 kilometers west of Bombay.

Those practices are something that one needs to transcend or grow out of. They are not necessary for self realisation. All that was necessary was an earnest enquiry into one's true nature, by dwelling on the non-verbal presence **I am**. Holding onto the pure

naked presence **I am**, dwelling on it, abiding in it without words, staying in it and not moving away from it into limited thoughts.

Whenever thoughts like 'I am this or I am that', 'I am a man', etc. arise, one can gently bring them back to dissolve in the pure **I am**.

If that is done persistently and firmly, this pure manifest 'I-ness' reveals its source, which is Absolute – Noumenon – God or Truth.

When I was with Nisargadatta I witnessed many wonders and unusual encounters. He showed me every consideration and went to great lengths to help me, even to the degree of giving me initiation, by secret mantra, into the glorious lineage of the Navanath Sampradaya – the nine Nath Gurus of which Nisargadatta was the current one at that time. This lineage stretches back into the distant past to the legendary Dattatreya, author of the Avadhut Gita.

Photos of several members of the Navanath Sampradaya were hanging on the wall in Maharaj's upstairs loft room. I accompanied Maharaj on many excursions around the city of Bombay. At one time I went to a public talk that he gave in a hall in the inner suburbs. Maharaj of course, spoke in Marathi, the local dialect and I could not follow what was said and it was not translated into English. I was probably the only foreigner there. There were about 200 hundred people there.

When we returned to his loft at Khetwadi 10th Lane, I asked Maharaj what he had told that group of people. He said, "I don't say in public what I say here in the privacy of my own room with intimate and sincere seekers like yourself. I just told them the normal traditional things like worship God and practice love and forgiveness with your fellow man, etc. If I told them the truth and pointed out that faith, hope and belief in God are only concepts and are not the truth that they are seeking, they may come after me and seek my blood. So, when I am invited to address a public group, I am impelled to tell them what they want to hear. A public

forum is not the appropriate place to expound the profundity of pure Advaita teachings.

On another occasion, I accompanied Nisargadatta to a concert of Indian music, which consisted of Sitar, Tamboura, and Tabla. The music lasted about an hour and as we were leaving the concert, Maharaj said, through an interpreter, "I must have had a lot of ignorance when I liked that sort of thing." That is an indication that everything a *jnani* says or does is knowledge or wisdom. Even informal occasions and statements reflect wisdom.

Music is sound, sound is vibration, vibration is simply a movement of energy, all of which takes place in and as phenomena, which is appearance only – *Maya* (illusion) – not reality.

Quite a few pundits (scholars of Indian Philosophy and Religion) came to engage Maharaj in dialectics and philosophical discussions but they were no match for his clear seeing and penetrating wisdom. He told them that all their knowledge was only a form of ignorance, for without truly knowing the 'knower', their knowledge was only hearsay.

Knowing such accumulated knowledge is not pure knowing or self realisation, which the *jnani* is firmly stabilised in. All common knowledge is acquired knowledge and after the fact. If I do not know what I am, whatever knowledge I have accumulated or acquired is irrelevant and useless.

Maharaj would test and trick you into exposing your own ignorance. He would not allow you to sit passively in his presence. He would challenge you and insist that you put forward questions to him. Those questions, if they were authentic or good ones, would elicit a response from him and these were usually of great power and profundity.

If there were few questions, Maharaj would sometimes bless us with a spontaneous discourse and at other times he would simply spontaneously start speaking without any prompting at all. These

talks would be profound and shake you to the core of your being. What poured out of him at those times was so pure and so powerful beyond words, that it was actually painful for the unenlightened seeker to take delivery of it.

He would not allow you to remain stuck in conceptual thinking or cling to any reference point or false security – such was his genuine compassion and concern for those genuine seekers who came to him. In full flight he was fearless and lion-like, yet at other times he was completely innocent like a little child.

No description can ever describe a *jnani* and when you truly meet him, you meet your SELF.

HE lives eternally in my heart and **I AM**.

Mark West, 2006

Appendix 1: Interview, Part 1

Why did you go to India in the first place?

Well, I became interested in spirituality. There was a sort of crisis in my life. I felt a great emptiness and in the early 70's, there were experiments with psychedelic drugs for experimental purposes and we used them and we gained an insight into a dimension that was greater than what we normally know.

For us at that time, it was like a religious experience. It was that which I suppose started the so-called spiritual search in my case.

At the time, there was an Indian guru touring Australia called Swami Muktananda. I went for his *darshan* in North Sydney at Helen Argent's place. As I was ushered into the room with Muktananda, there was a sort of a direct knowing or connection there. Even the Swami's skin seemed to be shining. And there was sort of a feeling of unconditional love that was seemingly being transmitted.

So from there, I went to these meetings for a couple of days and he said that I could, if I wished, join him in his ashram. He gave me initiation and permission to go there and stay in Ganeshpuri. So at that time, around 1973, I was 25 years old and I had enough savings to survive there – a few thousand dollars.

At that time, in '73, it didn't cost anything to stay in Muktananda's ashram. There was no charge. Of course, later on money came into it, it was a different situation.

So, I went there in '73 and I remained in the ashram until half way through '76. And I lived the monk's life – the complete monk's life and it was like I had renounced the world. And in retrospect, a person of 25 years of age who renounces the world – before you

renounce the world, you actually have to taste it. But that was the situation and then in '76, I was in Ganeshpuri Ashram.

A fellow Australian was there with me, Bob Adamson – fairly well known as “Sailor Bob”. He happened to get hold of a copy of a book called *I Am That* by Nisargadatta. We found out that he was living a short train ride away in Bombay. We were living in Ganeshpuri 80 kilometers west. Bob and I agreed to go there at some stage and actually meet Nisargadatta. And we did. There was a great contact there between Bob Adamson and Nisargadatta and even myself.

At that time, I didn't realize that spirituality was a sort of game. I knew certain things, how to do *seva* (self-less service [to God or Guru]) and how to be spiritual, loving, and kind and all those things, but as Nisargadatta pointed out – I didn't know who I was.

So I realized then, at that point, that it was a game and it was time for me to give up being a seeker. And he told us that we are not what we take ourselves to be – we should try and find out who we are. He said “your search is over. There is no point in staying at that place out there. You may as well come here.” And then we thought, “well OK, we're giving up Muktananda as our guru, we'll make Nisargadatta our guru.” And he said, “no you won't.” (laughs)

But he said, “you can come here as a friend (a spiritual friend)”. He said “I don't play that game.” I didn't know that it was a game, you know. And he made it clear. Even though in a way Nisargadatta was a guru, he didn't play any traditional guru games – and that was the greatness of the man.

I took a small room in Bombay for a couple of months and was going there 3 or 4 times a week for morning and evening *darshans*. I took some notes. Certain things happened and I felt that I understood what Maharaj said. I got the message that he was sharing.

But as he pointed out too, there's Yoga and there's *Bhoga*. Yoga is

asceticism and *Bhoga* is self-indulgence and indulging in pleasure. He said, “sometimes a yogi is rounded out in a bout of *bhoga*.” And it goes both ways.

Nisargadatta gave me everything he possibly could. Even initiation which he doesn't usually give to people because initiation is actually for beginners on the spiritual path. Apparently, my mind must have been yapping a fair bit at that time. I was only 28 years old at that stage.

So I received everything that I could and then I set off for Australia. But before then, I questioned Maharaj as much as I could and he assured me – he said, “the secret will be revealed to you.” It will be revealed to you, but he didn't say when. It's not a matter of time as I now know but at that stage, I was more immature spiritually or whichever way you want to put it.

Then I went back to Australia in '77 and because of a lack of spiritual friends, as you might call it, I fell back into a worldly life. I almost fell back asleep again. Fell back again into the Adamic dream of opposites – into illusion or the idea of separation. Different things: addiction, smoking pot, certain things like that which are common to the Western life.

But underneath it, that was always there. That message – those seeds that had been planted by him. He said “my words can't fail.” My sentences will tear apart the concepts of anyone who listens to them.

I loved him very, very dearly. My approach was very devotional. And I still was worshiping him as a guru and he knew that and sort of allowed that but it didn't matter.

He allowed you to stay quite a long time?

Yes. He didn't allow people to stay a lot there, but my approach was very devotional, quite humbled. I had a lot of questions. I was very respectful towards him – I was very worshipful towards him. He allowed me to take notes. A lot of people, he didn't like them taking notes, but in my case he did (allow it).

I had no preconceptions. And so even after returning to Australia in '77, I seemingly lost what I had gained. But then, I think it was about '95-'97, this awakening happened for me and his words have now proved to be true. But seemingly in my case, it was 20 years. Although time is an illusion.

As I see from reading my friend Bob's book, who I lost touch with, he left India a few months earlier than I did and when he walked out of that place at 10th Lane Khetwadi, he never needed help from that day forward. He walked out of there a free man.

In retrospect, I see that I was always free too. But for me, it wasn't a full dawning until probably 6 or 8 years back. Now that that awakening has happened for me, I can see the simplicity of it and the truth of it. And his words have proved true.

Recently, I brought out the notes again that I had taken and went through them. A friend of mine went through them with me too and typed them out on the typewriter. And then I was fortunate enough, just a few months back, to meet a good friend Gilbert Schultz who has now gone through them and he sees great value in them. He says that they resonate with his teachings and they seem to be new teachings of Nisargadatta – new authentic material.

There has been since Nisargadatta's death, there have been quite a few books. Of course, *I Am That* has been the main one. There have also been Jean Dunn's books and Robert Powell's books and some other ones. And now (perhaps another one) thanks to Gilbert – he seems to think that we may be able to publish a small book through the notes that I had gathered there during the eleven months with Nisargadatta.

You've covered some of my questions already. How do you understand – Nisargadatta often said “neti neti”. How do you understand that?

Well he was saying – his teaching is **I Am That**. *Tat Tvam Asi* which means Thou Art That. And in that discourse, the sage was asked by the disciple, would he be kind enough to point out the truth to the disciple and the sage said *neti neti*: “not this, not this” – not anything that you can see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. And the disciple pushed the sage and said could you give me a more clear pointing out? And he said “you are that”.

Neti neti is the negation, casting away everything. And what he says is stay in the I Amness and whatever comes up – any thought, any concept, discard it. Say “not this, not this” and stay in the I Amness. So whatever arises there, he was still saying “it’s a concept – discard it.” What ever anyone would come up with, he wouldn’t agree with them – “It’s a concept, discard it.”

Whatever comes up in the mind stream, don’t identify with that and just let go. Remain in your natural state which is with us all the time and always and which we never actually leave.

In light of all that, what have you gained from Nisargadatta’s teachings?

Well, I haven’t gained anything really. I’ve actually lost (laughs).

Neti neti. (laughter)

I lost all – in my association with him, I finally lost everything. And now I can see, even the same as him, total loss of pride in

individuality is my Nirvana. And that *is* Nirvana – knowing that there's freedom from that entity – that person that was suffering and confused. And the person who began that search has now dissolved altogether.

Now I realize that there's no entity there that's really done anything. Because of that, I have the freedom from all those so-called problems that I had. The hatred, the fear, all those things that happened – the so-called negative things that happened. And I am glad that they happened. But there's nobody there to be glad either.

There is a feeling of utter freedom and complete effortless living now, whereas before I was always feeling that there was something missing. There was something wrong with me personally. That's all now gone. So if I've gained anything, it's just that.

What I was seeking was always there with me. That freedom is there constantly now. And not as an intellectual concept or anything like that.

So, there's no suffering?

There's no psychological suffering. But there's pain in the body – there are pains. Sometimes there may be old habit patterns that come up again. And in the words of Nisargadatta, "they're seen and discarded". Sure, still there are times. Fixations still happen – the old habit patterns.

There's anger towards some individual. And as soon as it comes up, it is seen straight away. There is no method to get rid of it. You see it and it falls away by itself.

There are still those (apparent transient events). But for

psychological suffering, no. Fear, no. No fear at all.

So why should anybody bother with this spirituality?

Well, if a person doesn't realize his true position or his true nature, it doesn't matter what he gains in the world, it won't be fulfilling, because unenlightened existence is inherently unsatisfactory. Forgetting our true nature, we act like a king who behaves as a beggar in his dream. Even if I become emperor of the whole world, I still won't be satisfied unless I realize that the entity there is a fiction – the reference point that I think that I am. That can never be satisfied.

Unless you investigate spirituality – and then you must also come to the end of spirituality too. Because that's got to be cast out later too. Unless it is fully investigated, you will never get peace of mind or peace of God.

And you're seeking that out there in the manifestation. And without realizing your true nature, you won't get lasting satisfaction through anything external – through your wife, family, or anything like that.

So what advice can you give a seeker, in a brief account?

Well, now, if a seeker was to come to me and ask me, I would tell them that what they are seeking they already are but that the search is a problem from that point. Because if they think that at some future time they will be able to get what they are seeking and the search has been going through the mind or the "me" – if they think that at some future time, they're going to be able to get it,

they're deluding themselves because there really is no future time at all. Everything is here and now omnipresence. Presence is already here.

What they are seeking, they already are. I would tell them to give up the search. But this sort of thing can be hurtful to people. Because when I first returned from India, I was very enthusiastic and told people when I shouldn't have.

You're not a missionary?

A person I know who came back from India fell into that trap and it became rather disturbing. Now I know that unless someone asks me about spirituality, I won't talk about it.

And the last question is "who cares?"

Yeah, that's right. Yes. (Hearty laughter)

Now I can laugh – a genuine laugh. That entity that is trying to grasp something – that is totally unnecessary.

Now it's a sort of effortless living. A feeling now of complete and utter freedom that is just unspeakable. And there's a feeling of a love for all humanity now. It's not a personal love. It's something that I would so much like to give and share.

I would like to share that with anybody that I could, but I realize that that must happen by itself.

There's no one here that can take credit for anything. There's no one here to stress out about anything in particular.

Appendix 2: Interview, Part 2

Most people want to, because they are living in anticipation of the penny dropping, not realizing the penny never ceases dropping, where there's no substantial formation of a knower or the known...

And in regards to the search, there's a problem there because "some future time that you're going to get something" – it's a mistaken thing because you already are that so there's no point for the search because the search is over from the Advaita point of view.

People hear that – they hear that and it perplexes them because...

They feel unfulfilled.

Or they hear that as a concept – they haven't realized that they are that, they're caught up in concepts...

There's no one, no entity actually caught up in concepts but through the mental processes and the identified state, there's a wish to conceptualize it into a concise formula or mantra or something that they can hang on to and say "well, yes I know."

Yes, and this is what a lot of these modern teachers are sort of perpetuating. It may not be their intention, but from this point of view, actually there is no teacher nor are there any teachings. Everything is that. There's no separation anywhere. No scope for

that. So who's going to wear (accept) that? You know what I mean?

But that's the truth that will make you free. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

Now whether you know it or not, it's there and you are that, but if you don't know it, it's almost like "where is it?" – if you're coming from a reference point of a separated me or whoever you perceive yourself to be – which is an invalid reference point again, because it is referring to past experiences, and the future – future experiences.

Now I noticed in the notes that you took when you were in India that there's a short sentence that Nisargadatta says, which I think I have read elsewhere, he says, "there are no customers for this knowledge." It's quite an interesting and challenging thing to say to a seeker because, you know, they are customers (laughter) and he says that there are no customers. How would you elaborate on that?

Well, it takes away whatever pride you've got in individuality – you're going to be stripped bare and you don't want to be exposed. You know because unless you've had a gut full of going around and around on this wheel like a dog chasing its tail and sort of going from one teacher to another and you get to a person like him, he's not going to pull any punches. He's going to say "full stop."

There are no customers because if this knowledge dawns on you, you'll disappear. There'll be no entity there and you'll realize that you are that. And the whole thing...like another saying that he was saying, "In this vast Consciousness (with a capital C, not the time bound consciousness), there is no religion, no Karma, and no time. It exists prior to the sense of *I am*." So who's the entity there? Who's the seeker there that's going to get something? See

what I mean? There's no doer! There's no time. It's just pure Consciousness without any boundaries. And it can't be grasped but it can be understood and so he would say don't try to know it, but hold on to this understanding.

Because if one would grasp at it, it will be the mind that's grasping at it and the sage is trying to point out that the answer is not in the mind and that's where this has dragged on – for all these 20-30 years of running around searching.

Where has the search taken place? In the mind – which is the “me”, in “time”, which is just another concept, which has got no substance or independent nature whatsoever.

By that we mean that if the consciousness or pure awareness is not there, there can't be any thought so the “me” which I have taken myself to be, has got no substance or independent nature. Now, are they going to accept that message?

Here your self-esteem will be totally exposed. Because there are all of these people sitting there with him embracing this message, and he's liable to say that all of them are the result of spit! (laughter) By that he means, that the member that has ejected this spit, we would always like to keep that covered because of this fraudulent world that has been created there, so what would happen to your self-esteem then? It would disappear and if you're embraced by the grace, you would realize the grace of it. To be relieved of that burden that you so-called carried for so long and it would be pointed out that really nothing has happened, that the reality hasn't changed its true nature. It's appearing in all these different shapes and forms.

Sometimes, with Nisargadatta, with a few people who were there, it would sometimes appear to people that the way he would express things was being cruel. He wouldn't suffer fools, but his cruelty was the ultimate kindness. But it would appear to an ordinary observer that maybe he was being too harsh or he was fiery, but that fieriness was coming from compassion and love.

One of the first things that struck me when I read "I Am That" – he says the whole problem comes about by an attachment to the body, of thinking oneself as being the body.

He says "you're not the body, you're not the mind, find out what you are" and when speaking with, particularly intellectuals, they object to speaking from a universal point of view and this is because the investigation hasn't been thoroughly followed through with them, otherwise they would certainly have an inkling of what it means.

It's obvious that this attachment to the body is the "me" or what we commonly call "me" and one thing that is now clear and obvious is that I can see everybody, I can see everything.

I am logically the center of my world, but I cannot see myself.

Yes, the eye can't see itself.

And this point is highly significant and it's totally overlooked and it seems to me that this is the essence of the investigation, because unless one enters that space of direct knowing as the knowing presence...as the freedom of direct seeing...

Yes, as long as you feel that you are the body or you are the mind, you're never going to be able to grasp the truth of this Advaita teaching.

Because how did I come to be? How did I get this feeling or concept that I am? Prior to that, a hundred years back, there were no problems about being a man or a woman, anything whatsoever, but it's only now that the concept has arisen, the feeling "I am" – I've been so-called "born" and I'm a so-called "person".

But this is all hearsay – if you investigate it, you will find out that this is an appearance only – that birth and death are concepts, that you're not the body. Everything can be broken down to the basic pure consciousness or empty space-like awareness, but you have to follow the investigation all the way through and you will find out that there is no center as such – that this center that we are taking ourselves to be is an invalid reference point.

Everything is referred back, everything that happens to me during my life is referred back to that reference point, or that center, which is taken to be something substantial – but on the investigation, we will see that it isn't substantial – it will fall away and you will realize that your true nature is there untouched. And he would call that “awareness is prior to the consciousness” and nobody can deny the fact of their own beingness if they're there – they can't grasp it and yet they can't negate it.

It's just the conscious presence. It hasn't grown old – there's something there that hasn't changed. Everything else has been changing. So this identity that I've assumed as Mr. West or Mr. Smith or whatever it happens to be, in the long run is going to prove illusory because it's going to disappear, but that's a bit terrifying unless you're serious about the inquiry to find out “Who Am I?”

Have I really been born? Am I really going to die? What is this, that I am? What's it all about? But then, that means, as Nisargadatta says, all that is required is earnestness.

No technique can do it, because it's impossible to become what you already are.

So normally, through the western outlook, I imagine that there should be some method that I can apply, using a system, which is taking 'time' to attain this realization or truth. But taking time to get to the timeless is fictitious. By all appearances, time is still there (for practical purposes), but ultimately it's a mental concept.

This reality is, in its vast consciousness, omnipresent.

There's a kind of superficial contradiction in the fact that prior to you getting this message, Nisargadatta says "my words are like seeds that have been planted in you and they will come to fruition." So there is a seeming difference between prior to that message and the fruition of that message which is of course the negation of everything that's not real – the seeing through of all concepts. So there's no real contradiction at all.

No, it's (only) an apparent contradiction.

So, if we can talk about time...you spent time with Nisargadatta...

He didn't speak English. His words were translated by whoever was there to translate, Mullarpattan or...

S. V. Saprey was also one of the excellent translators.

And I'm sure there would be people interested in how you felt that the message was coming directly from Nisargadatta but being translated through a translator so there's that direct contact with him and there's the translation for the benefit of your mind which was trying to understand in your native language, English.

Do you remember, obviously you do, something about that?

In spite of the translator being there, the message was pouring out. It was so authentic that even the translator couldn't garble it up. The facial expressions and every thing and the experience of being with a person who was utterly free was very profound and very, very moving.

In retrospect, it seemed like a process of time – like being with Muktananda first, three or four years in the ashram and then being months with Nisargadatta, but now that this enlightenment has flowered – you realize that it wasn't a matter of time at all. You were always that. So it appears like that, but you are always that anyway.

It's a removal of whatever it is that seems to be obscuring...

There's nothing wrong now – and there was nothing wrong then.

Yes and now there's a clear indication that in Advaita, we're talking about non-doership. In other words, you're not the doer of your actions. That is abundantly clear because I realize now through the investigation, that there really is no entity that's ever done anything.

So where does that leave you? It leaves you right here, right now. Clear and present. Aware and conscious. And as Sailor Bob was saying, in his books, "what is wrong with right now?"

It's only if we move conceptually away from now, thinking of past and future, that anxiety or stress comes in. But it's only an appearance of moving away. You can never, ever move away from now, because if I am thinking of the future, when am I thinking of it? – Now.

And the other one that seekers will come at you with, because there's no end to the tricks that the mind will create in order to keep the separation real, it will come at you with another one saying "oh well this conditioning is very strong", like "I'm a Catholic", "I'm a Jewish person", "I was indoctrinated"... again, what conditioning is there unless you think about it?

So our problems are to do with thought and the mind – and really

if you investigate it all, you will find there's no mind at all, apart from thought.

The mind is taking its power through that pure awareness – or whatever concept you want to give to it and it is non-conceptual awareness.

But it's taking its power, it's usurping the power from that, and you can see that it won't be satisfied unless the full awakening dawns because it doesn't matter what it accumulates to become whole – if there's a sense of separation there, the seeking won't end.

It will continue until the falseness of it is seen through.

So stop searching.

Yes! (laughter) Yeah, the search is a dead end in an imaginary time realm.

So when you left India, you obviously came to some decision to return to Australia...

Yeah, money had run out and things...

And you felt pretty full from your experiences there?

Yes. It had been four years there and money had run out and some westerners remained there to stay without money and they become feral more or less and you could see them begging like Indian monks, but it is below a westerner's dignity. You shouldn't really do a thing like that because it's not a rich country so why should westerners go there and beg too? You've still got to, somehow, even if it's a world of illusion, make a living or support yourself in some practical, positive way.

So did you have any problems in getting your airfare back to Australia?

I had to borrow some money from an American lady because I had gone through what small savings we had at that time – three or four thousand dollars, but that was enough to live in India – at that time, in the 70s, for nearly three or four years.

And coming back to the West, the mistake was – when you have this insight or whatever, you want to deliver the goods and you want to get with other seekers and Nisargadatta had warned us about that and to leave that alone. But of course, it was the new age time, and everyone was on the so-called spiritual path but I learned then that unless someone asks me about this it shouldn't really come up at all, because there is no need to spread the message to anybody because they are that anyway.

But there is the enthusiasm, in the early times and also there was a sort of falling back into delusion, apparently. But the seed is there and his words proved true. About ten years back I felt this complete freedom and awakening beyond concepts that was undeniable. And now I feel an uncaused joy – almost utter freedom and also something that can be shared with people and the good news is that there isn't any death – no one's going to die. And that's a good message to be able to spread to somebody if they're open to it.

People don't want to disturb their belief system unless there's a burning desire...

Yes, unless there's a crisis...

Yes, or a crisis brings it up. It is interesting that a crisis is often the catalyst for some.

Yes, and now in my case it's a wonderful feeling because I have the direct knowledge or realization that I'm being lived – this energy is doing everything – it's moving the galaxies, breathing me, beating my heart and things like that.

So in that sense, it's almost like effortless living and that is (hard to believe) for most people who are making a tremendous effort, particularly in the West – I've got to look after my family, I've got to make an effort to make sure everything keeps on track, but when this realization dawns on you, whatever needs to be done will be done.

And it's a great liberation, because there is no doubt that there is no entity there to make the effort. There's no entity here saying "I'm going to take the next breath" and yet everything gets done. Everything happens which it always does anyway and everything is actually happening by itself and it doesn't need me to push it.

And of course before that the ego showed itself as a thought that I could always make a contribution. (laughter) And of course that just causes suffering – that gets in the way.

So I just want to say to the listener, if you are interested in this particular realization, *Advaita Vedanta*, that there's no special way that you have to act. You don't have to appear special in any

particular way. Just let life live you – try and stand out of the way. And there's no particular way that you have to look or act. Just let life unfold as it does. Nisargadatta said "Don't pretend to be what you're not. Don't fail to be what you are."

That's a great one because we usually never say what we really mean because we feel that we might hurt somebody's feelings – but in the long run it is better to be what you are rather than to pretend to be what you're not in order to please your friends or your relatives or things like that.

Well let's just end on... if you could explain why Nisargadatta chose that name for himself.

Yes, well his guru Siddharameshwar asked him to remain with the feeling "I Am", with the consciousness "I Am" – to remain in that consciousness and that would then reveal its source. And having followed that through, Maharaj did explicitly as Siddharameshwar had told him because he was a simple man, an uneducated man and he was a member of his group called the Navanath Sampradaya.

I said, "Maharaj, can I be a member? Can I join the Navanath Sampradaya?" which is the group of nine friends which is the Nath gurus going back quite a few centuries and all those gurus were simple, plain people – uneducated people – simple talking people and he said, it's a mythic group but yes, you can be a member if you want to, if you're earnest and your heart's there, you can be a member.

But what Nisargadatta ultimately realized when this realization dawned on him, a couple of years after the death of his guru, the full awakening dawned for him and he realized what he called the natural state.

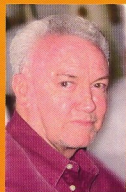
The natural state is there, your natural state is there, it is absolutely perfect, it's here right now, it's untouched and he took that name Nisargadatta because it means that he is the giver of the natural state. (Nisarga means the natural state). Datta means giver or sharing so he, Nisargadatta, is the giver of the natural state. So he gives you what you've already got (laughter) – your natural state – paradoxical but that's what this Advaita teaching... it involves paradox.

The simplicity of it is beautiful, unspeakable and it's there and it's everyone's birthright. There is no reason why anyone can't understand this if it's pointed out in a gentle, clear way by somebody and if people are not holding onto preconceived concepts or things like that. It will dawn on them, it will resonate with them and they will realize that, as Nisargadatta said, wisdom is not imparted by another – it is the one who is listening right now – it is your own true nature.

So I will use his words but they are my words because I've realized them – but it doesn't matter what words you use.



gleanings from
nisargadatta



This book contains many previously unpublished excerpts of talks given by Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj during 1976 and 1977. The author, Mark West, took notes with Maharaj's blessing. The pith and potency of Nisargadatta's words will be familiar to many readers who know this great sage and will serve as a powerful introduction to his teaching for others.