

# ASMI

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

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

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

[ASMI home](#)

---

## **I am not this person, this body-mind or any thing**

*As I can't be what I perceive, I am not this body-mind or any  
thing that I am conscious of.*

As body, you are in space. As mind, you are in time. But are you a mere body with a mind in it? Have you ever investigated? (252)

Why not investigate the very idea of body? Does the mind appear in the body or the body in the mind? Surely there must be a mind to conceive the "I-am-the-body" idea. A body without a mind cannot be 'my body'. 'My body' is invariably absent when the mind is in abeyance. It is also absent when the mind is deeply engaged in thoughts and feelings. (434)

You observe the heart feeling, the mind thinking, the body acting; the very act of perceiving shows that you are not what you perceive. (2)

The perceived cannot be the perceiver. Whatever you see, hear or think of, remember - you are not what happens, you are he to whom it happens. (519)

Desire, fear, trouble, joy, they cannot appear unless you are there to appear to. Yet, whatever happens points to your existence as a perceiving centre. Disregard the pointers and be aware of what they are pointing to. (220)

Realize that every mode of perception is subjective, that what is seen or heard, touched or smelt, felt or thought, expected or imagined, is in the mind and not in reality, and you will

experience peace and freedom from fear. (201)

When you realize that the distinction between inner and outer is in the mind only, you are no longer afraid. (464)

You are neither the body nor in the body. There is no such thing as body. You have grievously misunderstood yourself. To understand rightly, investigate. (253)

You are not in the body, the body is in you! The mind is in you. They happen to you. They are there because you find them interesting.  
(212)

You only know that you react. Who reacts and to what, you do not know. You know on contact that you exist: "I am". The "I am this", "I am that" are imaginary. (337)

To myself, I am neither perceivable nor conceivable; there is nothing I can point out to and say: "this I am". You identify yourself with everything so easily; I find it impossible. The feeling "I am not this or that, nor is anything mine" is so strong in me that as soon as a thing or a thought appears, there comes at once the sense "this I am not". (268)

Whatever you may hear, see or think of, I am not that. I am free from being a percept or a concept. (152)

As you cannot see your face, but only its reflection in the mirror, so you can know only your image reflected in the stainless mirror of pure awareness. See the stains and remove them. The nature of the perfect mirror is such that you cannot see it. Whatever you can see is bound to be a stain. Turn away from it, give it up, know it as unwanted. All perceivables are stains. (126)

Having perfected the mirror so that it reflects correctly, truly, you can turn the mirror round and see in it a reflection of yourself - true as far as the mirror can reflect. But the reflection is not yourself - you are the seer of the reflection. Do understand it clearly - whatever you may perceive, you are not what you perceive. You can see both the image and the mirror. You are neither. (330)

Remember, nothing you perceive is your own. (510)

What is really your own, you are not conscious of. (445)

You are nothing that you are conscious of. (458)

***As there must be something unchanging to register discontinuity, I am not this body-mind, which is neither continuous nor permanent.***

The mind is discontinuous. Again and again it blanks out, like in sleep or swoon or distraction. There must be something continuous to register discontinuity. Memory is always partial, unreliable and > evanescent. It does not explain the strong sense of identity pervading consciousness, the sense "I am". Find out what is at the root of it. (307)

You cannot be conscious of what does not change. All consciousness is consciousness of change. But the very perception of change - does it not necessitate a changeless background? (516)

Changes are inevitable in the changeful, but you are not subject to them. You are the changeless background, against which changes are perceived. (333)

The self based on memory is momentary. But such self demands unbroken continuity behind it. You know from experience that there are gaps when your self is forgotten. What brings it back to life? What wakes you up in the morning? There must be some constant factor bridging the gaps in consciousness. If you watch carefully, you will find that even your daily consciousness is in flashes, with gaps intervening all the time. What is in the gaps? What can there be but your real being, that is timeless? Mind and mindlessness are one to it. (333)

Realize that whatever you think yourself to be is just a stream of events; that while all happens, comes and goes, you alone are, the changeless among the changeful, the self-evident among the inferred. Separate the observed from the observer and abandon false identifications. (215)

The succession of transient moments creates the illusion of time, but the timeless reality of pure being is not in movement, for all movement requires a motionless background. It is itself the background. Once you have found it in yourself, you know

that you had never lost that independent being. (409)

What changes is not real, what is real does not change. Now, what is it in you that does not change? As long as there is food, there is body and mind. When the food is stopped, the body dies and the mind dissolves. But does the observer perish? It is a matter of actual experience that the self has being independent of mind and body. It is being-awareness-bliss. Awareness of being is bliss. (210)

You must realize yourself as the immovable behind and beyond the movable, the silent witness of all that happens. (319)

***As the person is a changing stream of mental objects that I as the subject take to be my body-mind, I cannot be a person. I am, but I can't be this or that.***

Nothing is wrong with you, but the ideas you have of yourself are altogether wrong. It is not you who desires, fears and suffers, it is the person built on the foundation of your body by circumstances and influences. You are not that person. (424)

The person is never the subject. You can see a person, but you are not the person. (64)

Your being a person is due to the illusion of space and time; you imagine yourself to be at a certain point occupying a certain volume; your personality is due to your self-identification with the body. (205)

How does personality come into being? By identifying the present with the past and projecting it into the future. (206)

The body-mind is like a room. It is there, but I need not live in it all the time. (153)

The person is merely the result of a misunderstanding. In reality, there is no such thing. Feelings, thoughts and actions race before the watcher in endless succession, leaving traces in the brain and creating an illusion of continuity. A reflection of the watcher in the mind creates the sense of "I" and the person acquires an apparently independent existence. In reality there is no person, only the watcher identifying himself with the "I" and the "mine". (343)

It is because the "I am" is false that it wants to continue. Reality need not continue - knowing itself indestructible, it is indifferent of forms and expressions. To strengthen and stabilize the "I am", we do all sorts of things - all in vain, for the "I am" is being rebuilt from moment to moment. It is unceasing work, and the only radical solution is to dissolve the separative sense of "I am such and such < person" once and for good. Being remains, but not self-being. (299)

It is not the "I am" that is false, but what you take yourself to be. I can see, beyond the least shadow of doubt, that you are not what you believe yourself to be. (458)

What is really your own, you are not conscious of. What you are conscious of is neither you nor yours. Yours is the power of perception, not what you perceive. It is a mistake to take the conscious to be the whole of man. Man is the unconscious, the conscious and the superconscious, but you are not the man. Yours is the cinema screen, the light as well as the seeing power, but the picture is not you. (445)

***As it is my presence, which is always here and now, that gives the quality of actual to any event, I must be beyond time and space. I was never born, nor will ever die.***

Take the idea "I was born". You may take it to be true. It is not. You were not born, nor will you ever die. It is the idea that was born and shall die, not you. By identifying yourself with it you became mortal. (392)

Your mistake lies in your belief that you were born. You were never born nor will you ever die. (83)

Between the remembered and the actual there is a basic difference which can be observed from moment to moment. At no point of time is the actual the remembered. Between the two there is a difference in kind, not merely in intensity. The actual is unmistakably so. By no effort of will or imagination can you interchange the two. Now, what is it that gives this unique quality to the actual? A moment back, the remembered was actual, in a moment the actual will be the remembered. What makes the actual unique?

Obviously, it is the sense of being present. In memory and anticipation, there is a clear feeling that it is a mental state

under observation, while in the actual the feeling is primarily of being present and aware. Wherever you go, the sense of here and now you carry with you all the time. It means that you are independent of space and time, that space and time are in you, not you in them. It is your self-identification with the body, which, of course, is limited in space and time, that gives you the feeling of finiteness. In reality you are infinite and eternal. (516)

[\*ASMI home\*](#)

[\*Nonduality Salon Home\*](#)