

Nonduality Salon Presents

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

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

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The way to Realization: Part Two

*Not through knowledge of things, or through experiences,
but through self-knowledge.*

Not through knowledge of things

A general longing for liberation is only the beginning; to find the proper means and use them is the next step. The seeker has only one goal in view: to find his own true being. Of all desires it is the most ambitious, for nothing and nobody can satisfy it; the seeker and the sought are one, and the search alone matters. (223)

Mere knowledge is not enough; the knower must be known. The pandits and yogis may know many things, but of what use is mere knowledge when the self is not known? It will be certainly misused. Without the knowledge of the knower there can be no peace. (301)

Just as every drop of the ocean carries the taste of the ocean, so does every moment carry the taste of eternity. Definitions and descriptions have their place as useful incentives for further search, but you must go beyond them into what is undefinable and indescribable, except in negative terms. (413)

You may know all the right words, quote the scriptures, be brilliant in your discussions and yet remain a bag of bones. Or you may be inconspicuous and humble, an insignificant person altogether, yet glowing with loving kindness and deep wisdom. (515)

To deal with things, knowledge of things is needed. To deal with people, you need insight, sympathy. To deal with

yourself, you need nothing. Be what you are: conscious being, and don't stray away from yourself. (317)

Relatively, yes [there can be true knowledge of things]. Absolutely, there are no things. To know that nothing is is true knowledge. (359)

As long as you are engrossed in the world, you are unable to know yourself: to know yourself, turn away your attention from the world and turn it within. (479)

You can not know perfection, you can know only imperfection. For knowledge to be, there must be separation and disharmony. You can know what you are not, but you can not know your real being. You can be only what you are. The entire approach is through understanding, which is in the seeing of the false as false. But to understand, you must observe from outside. (336)

The discovery of truth is in the discernment of the false. You can know what is not. What is - you can only be. Knowledge is relative to the known. In a way, it is the counterpart of ignorance. Where ignorance is not, where is the need of knowledge? By themselves, neither ignorance nor knowledge have being. They are only states of mind, which again is but an appearance of movement in consciousness. (370)

There is no such state as seeing the real. Who is to see what? You can only be the real, which you are, anyhow. The problem is not mental. Abandon false ideas, that is all. There is no need of true ideas. There aren't any. (359-60)

It is always the false that makes you suffer, the false desires and fears, the false values and ideas, the false relationships between people. Abandon the false and you are free of pain; truth makes happy, truth liberates. (253)

Truth can be expressed only by the denial of the false -in action. For this, you must see the false as false (viveka) and reject it (vairagya). Renunciation of the false is liberating and energizing. It lays open the road to perfection. (314)

You must unlearn everything. God is the end of all desire and knowledge. (336)

Now I know nothing, for all knowledge is in dream only and

not valid. I know myself and I find no life nor death in me, only pure being, not being this or that, but just being. (261)

Not through experiences

Most of your experiences are unconscious. The conscious ones are very few. You are unaware of the fact because to you only the conscious ones count. Become aware of the unconscious. Desire and fear are the obscuring and distorting factors. When mind is free of them the unconscious becomes accessible. (406)

An event becomes an experience only when I am emotionally interested. I am in a state which is complete, which seeks not to improve on itself. Of what use is experience to me? (317)

All experience is necessarily transient. But the ground of all experience is immovable. Nothing that may be called an event will last. But some events purify the mind and some stain it. Moments of deep insight and all-embracing love purify the mind, while desires and fears, envies and anger, blind beliefs and intellectual arrogance pollute and dull the psyche. (331)

Above all, we want to remain conscious. We shall bear every suffering and humiliation, but we shall rather remain conscious. Unless we revolt against this craving for experience and let go the manifested altogether, there can be no relief. We shall remain trapped. (328)

At present your being is mixed up with experiencing. All you need is to unravel being from the tangle of experiences. Once you have known pure being, without being this or that, you will discern it among experiences and you will no longer be misled by names and forms. Self-limitation is the very essence of personality. (206)

Experience leaves only memories behind and adds to the burden which is heavy enough. You need no more experiences. The past ones are sufficient. And if you feel you need more, look into the hearts of people around you. You will find a variety of experiences which you would not be able to go through in a thousand years. Learn from the sorrows of others and save yourself your own. It is not experience that you need, but the freedom from all experience. (317)

Most of the people vegetate, but do not live. They merely

gather experiences and enrich their memory. But experience is the denial of Reality, which is neither sensory nor conceptual, neither of the body nor of the mind, though it includes and transcends them both. (318)

All experience is born of imagination. (262)

There is no such thing as the experience of the real. The real is beyond experience. All experience is in the mind. You know the real by being the real. (438)

All experience is illusory, limited and temporal. Expect nothing from experience. Realization by itself is not an experience, though it may lead to a new dimension of experiences. Yet the new experiences, however interesting, are not more real than the old. Definitely realization is not a new experience. It is the discovery of the timeless factor in every experience. It is awareness, which makes experience possible. Just like in all the colours light is the colourless factor, so in every experience awareness is present, yet it is not an experience. (403)

Experience, however sublime, is not the real thing. By its very nature it comes and goes. Self-realization is not an acquisition. It is more of the nature of understanding. Once arrived at, it cannot be lost. On the other hand, consciousness is changeful, flowing, undergoing transformation from moment to moment. Do not hold on to consciousness and its contents. Consciousness held, ceases. To try to perpetuate a flash of insight, or a burst of happiness is destructive of what it wants to preserve. What comes must go. The permanent is beyond all comings and goings. Go to the root of all experience, to the sense of being. Beyond being and not-being lies the immensity of the real. Try and try again. (323)

Be interested in yourself beyond all experience, be with yourself, love yourself; the ultimate security is found only in self-knowledge. The main thing is earnestness. Be honest with yourself and nothing will betray you. (217)

But through self-knowledge

You do not know what you are and therefore you imagine yourself to be what you are not. Hence desires and fear and overwhelming activity in order to escape. (224-5)

If you want to live sanely, creatively and happily, and have infinite riches to share, search for what you are. (221)

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

Unless you know yourself well, how can you know another? And when you know yourself, you are the other. (429)

The limited only is perfectible. The unlimited is already perfect. You are perfect, only you don't know it. Learn to know yourself and you will discover wonders. (413)

You are what you are, timelessly, but of what use is it to you unless you know it and act on it? Your begging bowl may be of pure gold, but as long as you do not know it you are a pauper. You must know your inner worth and trust it and express it in the daily sacrifice of desire and fear. (508)

Believe me, there is no goal, nor a way to reach it. You are the way and the goal, there is nothing else to reach except yourself. All you need is to understand, and understanding is the flowering of the mind. The tree is perennial, but the flowering and the fruit-bearing come in season. The seasons change, but not the tree. You are the tree. You have grown numberless branches and leaves in the past, and you may grow them also in the future - yet you remain. Not what was, or shall be, must you know, but what is. Yours is the desire that creates the universe. Know the world as your own creation and be free. (380)

There is nothing in the world that you cannot know, when you know yourself. Thinking yourself to be the body, you know the world as a collection of material things. When you know yourself as a centre of consciousness, the world appears as the ocean of the mind. When you know yourself as you are in reality, you know the world as yourself. (380)

Merely assuaging fears and satisfying desires will not remove this sense of emptiness you are trying to escape from; only self-knowledge can help you. By self-knowledge I mean full knowledge of what you are not. Such knowledge is attainable and final; but to the discovery of what you are there can be no end. The more you discover, the more there remains to discover. (480)

The reward of self-knowledge is freedom from the personal self. You cannot know the knower, for you are the knower. The fact of knowing proves the knower. You need no other proof. The knower of the known is not knowable. Just like the light is known in colours only, so is the knower known in knowledge. (360)

Begin from the beginning: give attention to the fact that you are. At no time can you say "I was not". All you can say is "I don't remember". You know how unreliable is memory. Accept that, engrossed in petty personal affairs, you have forgotten what you are; try to bring back the lost memory through the elimination of the known. You cannot be told what will happen, nor is it desirable; anticipation will create illusions. In the inner search, the unexpected is inevitable; the discovery is invariably beyond all imagination. Just as an unborn child cannot know life after birth, for it has nothing in its mind with which to form a valid picture, so is the mind unable to think of the real in terms of the unreal, except by negation: "Not this, not that". The acceptance of the unreal as real is the obstacle; to see the false as false and abandon the false brings reality into being. (513)

First realize your own being. This is easy because the sense "I am" is always with you. Then meet yourself as the knower, apart from the known. Once you know yourself as pure being, the ecstasy of freedom is your own. (520)

I am only interested in ignorance and the freedom from ignorance. (505)

Intelligence is the door to freedom, and alert attention is the mother of intelligence. (278)

Don't talk of means, there are no means. What you see as false, dissolves. It is the very nature of illusion to dissolve on investigation. Investigate - that is all. You cannot destroy the false, for you are creating it all the time. Withdraw from it, ignore it, go beyond, and it will cease to be. (455)

Do not try to know the truth, for knowledge by the mind is not true knowledge. But you can know what is not true, which is enough to liberate you from the false. The idea that you know what is true is dangerous, for it keeps you imprisoned in the

mind. It is when you do not know that you are free to investigate. And there can be no salvation without investigation, because non-investigation is the main cause of bondage. (457-8)

Keep very quiet and watch what comes to the surface of the mind. Reject the known, welcome the so far unknown and reject it in its turn. Thus you come to a state in which there is no knowledge, only being, in which being itself is knowledge. To know by being is direct knowledge. It is based on the identity of the seer and the seen. Indirect knowledge is based on sensation and memory, on proximity of the perceiver and his percept, confined with the contrast between the two. (486)

There is nothing to practise. To know yourself, be yourself. To be yourself, stop imagining yourself to be this or that. Just be. Let your nature emerge. Don't disturb your mind with seeking. You have only to look and see. Look at your self, at your own being. You know that you are and you like it. Abandon all imagining, that is all. (259)

What you take to be the "I" in the "I am" is not you. To know that you are is natural, to know what you are is the result of much investigation. You will have to explore the entire field of consciousness and go beyond. (312)

How do you know that you do not know your self? Your direct insight tells you that yourself you know first, for nothing exists without your being there to experience its existence. You imagine you do not know your self, because you cannot describe your self. You can only say: "I know that I am" and you will refuse as untrue the statement "I am not". But whatever can be described cannot be your self, and what you are cannot be described. You can only know your being by being yourself without any attempt at self-definition and self-description. Once you have understood that you are nothing perceivable or conceivable, that whatever appears in the field of consciousness cannot be your self, you will apply yourself to the eradication of all self-identification, as the only way that can take you to a deeper realization of your self. (517-8)

To know that you are neither in the body nor in the mind, though aware of both, is already self-knowledge. (518)

So many words you have learnt, so many you have spoken.

You know everything, but you do not know yourself. For the self is not known through words, only direct insight will reveal it. Look within, search within. (514)

Learning words is not enough. You may know the theory, but without the actual experience of yourself as the impersonal and unqualified centre of being, love and bliss, mere verbal knowledge is sterile. (509)

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