

# From Lemurs to Lamas

Confessions of a  
Bodhisattva

Prem Purushottama  
Goodnight

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Lemurs  
to Lamas:  
Confessions  
of  
a  
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## Confessions of a Bodhisattva

Prem Purushottama Goodnight

O-MeditationPublications



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This book is dedicated to this oceanic presence we call Osho.

I wish to express my eternal gratitude to beloved Amido for her invaluable assistance, suggestions and support, as well as for providing some of the photographs.

Through the process of putting this material down in words, I realize that there is a difference between re-membering a story and allowing the space of the story to retell itself.

And in the end, life is a story, a fictional non-fiction of which I am the Witness.

You are welcome to visit the blog site that I maintain [Sat Sangha Salon](http://Sat.Sangha.Salon.com) at o-meditation.com.

Love is Being,  
Purushottama

## Foreword

As the editor of *From Lemurs to Lamas: Confessions of a Bodhisattva*, I have had the pleasure of reading this book several times, from varying perspectives. I coined the term ‘mediting’ to describe attempts to really get to the meaning of the more potent essays. Before I could even attempt to consider what little tweaks I could make to optimize readability and comprehension, I had to first accept the invitation to consider a slew of questions that occur on the pathless path.

Purushottama from at an early age experiences the futility of a life spent in the material world, the outer world where ambition, wealth, power, etc. beckon. He has a glimpse of the riches found in the interior, through grace, through LSD, through discovering a heart connection with Meher Baba. This prompts a leap into the unknown – into a life of more immediate experience – embarking on a journey that took him to India where he met the living master he sought.

*From Lemurs to Lamas* details the insights that occur in all stages of his life. Descriptions of life in the Buddhafield that emanated from Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, later named Osho, evoke the very presence itself, the magic and the melting. Every aspect of life in the ashram in Poona, India, and later at the ranch in Oregon – from the therapy groups to the actual assigned job to interactions with fellow workers and bosses, not to mention daily discourses and occasional darshans – supported a deeper understanding and an opening of the heart.

The second section of this book distinctly turns from out to in. The gifts of the master and commune have been embraced and internalized. Now Purushottama finds the inner guru. His musings, poetic expressions, aphorisms, and essays are compelling. He thoroughly examines the questions that arise from his inward exploration, for example, what is turning in. With impeccable logic he uncovers the meaning of I am not the body. He acknowledges the human desire to help others and illuminates the pitfalls of such intent.

The most significant overarching theme, however, is the steady encouragement for each of us to begin the journey, or to pick it up again if it has paused, that permeates these essays. He so clearly conveys that in meditation one is always beginning for it is the reverse of accumulation. Wherever we are on the journey is the place to begin.

-Amido

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# DON'T FIGHT THE RIVER

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The first indication my life was about to change was the engine in my Cadillac El Dorado blowing up in Shreveport, Louisiana. I was at the end of a road trip taking orders for waterbed products. I took a bus back to Kansas City.

The second was when I learned while away, my friend Charlie, my parakeet, had been killed by the cat that belonged to my friends who were house-sitting.

Charlie was a real character and he used to fly out of his always-open cage and land on my nose to wake me up in the morning. That's what did him in. Charlie had been given to me by Scottie. Scottie was my oldest friend, not that I had known him the longest, but he was over 60. I was in my early twenties. He had named Charlie after Charlie Parker, a personal friend of his. Scottie was into Jesus, jazz, going to the horse races, and smoking pot.

The final straw, however, was that my apartment was broken into. The thieves took my stereo and speakers but fortunately left my album collection. I could either fight, or let go and go with the stream. I decided on the latter and endeavored to get ahead of the curve.

Soon everything that had any value, which wasn't much really, had been sold. It mostly consisted of the records and two Chinese rugs. The money was going to Europe with me. I was leaving behind my interest in a business I had built up over the past two years. I wasn't even going to tell the other principals involved; they could have what was left. I was concerned I might be persuaded to change my mind.

We had been applying for an SBA (Small Business Administration) loan in order to take our waterbed frame manufacturing business to the next level. We were getting orders, I had brought back plenty, but we needed capital in order to produce at a level that made money on our sales. When the SBA loan fell through, I knew that meant we would have to drop back and punt. But I was burnt out. I had had a nervous breakdown at 21. I was drinking 10-12 cups of coffee a day and smoking three packs of cigarettes. If this was life, I wasn't interested. I was ready to chuck it all in and go to Europe with whatever cash I could assemble and see what happens.

Six hundred dollars is what I would be landing in Luxembourg with after buying a cheap Icelandic Air flight. The last ride I got hitchhiking to New York was with the equipment truck for the rock band Seals and Crofts. Here was the first sign of what lay ahead. Seals and Crofts were into Baha'i and the driver of the van was a devotee of the young Guru Maharaji.

Soon, I was lying in the grass on the side of the road waiting for the sound of a car so I could jump up and stick out my thumb. The destination for the day was not known only the direction; in the meantime, I was feeling the ground beneath

my back, smelling the green grass and listening to the sounds of the birds flying nearby. I was reminded of Saint Francis.

Here, in stark contrast, was the difference between becoming and being.



## MOMBASA AND MORONI

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*The Port of Moroni*

In Nairobi, Kenya, while lying on my bunk in a youth hostel, a big blonde American guy entered the room and walked right up to me. His name was Peter. I wasn't the only one in the room, there were quite a few travelers that afternoon, but somehow, we were like long lost friends. We immediately hit it off, and as is so common with solo travelers, we decided to join our wagons for a while. He was on his way to South Africa to make some money. He had a friend working there, and in those days if you were white, you could easily get a job, especially in JoBurg. I was certainly in need of money.

By the time I arrived in Kenya I had forty dollars to my name. Not bad really, considering I had left the States four months earlier with about six hundred dollars and had spent nearly three months traveling in Europe, including a month on Crete, and had traveled overland through Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, and finally to Kenya. I had looked into teaching English in the Kenyan countryside and calculated I would need to stay two years in order to save enough money to enable me to resume my travels. The pay was around forty dollars a month.

Peter and I made the arrangement that he would front me the travel money and I would pay him back in South Africa. In those days it was not as easy as it is today to pass through the countries that were on the way to South Africa. Several of the countries, if I remember correctly Malawi and I'm pretty sure Rhodesia, required that you show a certain amount of cash to be able to enter. I don't remember how much it was but because of this fact we decided to look for alternative routes into S.A., and I got out my map. When we looked at the map, we could see this country off to the east (an island) that if we entered from the north and traveled to the south we would be just across from Lorenzo Marques, Mozambique, just a hop, skip and a jump into S.A. We knew absolutely nothing about Madagascar and that was part of the intrigue.

We did a little checking and found we should be able to get some kind of cargo boat from Mombasa to Majunga, Madagascar. Having secured our Madagascar visas, we headed off to the coast. It really was quite exciting to explore travel options in a port. We went to the harbor master and learned about a cement boat going to Madagascar by way of The Comoros. We arranged passage on the deck and decided to go up north to Lamu Island and enjoy the time before departure. A few other travelers were taking the same boat, a tall lanky English guy and a big Canadian from Ottawa named Doug.

Everyone bought supplies for the trip: sardines, papayas, bananas, oats, biscuits (cookies), etc. The night before cast off, we all went out to experience the bar scene near the big tusks in Mombasa. It seemed appropriate sailor behavior. I think all of us ended up with a lady of the night; I know I did. The next morning, we met up at the dock and set sail. It really is a nice way to bid farewell to a place – by boat. The Mombasa harbor is quite beautiful with the fort on one end and the old city, a mix of colonial and Arab architecture. I haven't been back to Mombasa since then but I understand it has grown immensely. Apparently, the old city remains as it was. The new city just grew around the old.

I remember the first morning, the English guy was eating papaya with oats sprinkled on top and I joined in. Not long after the sea started to take its toll. The boat was quite small and so was tossed pretty well by the swells. It wasn't until almost twenty years later I could smell papaya without starting to retch. For three days I lay in the hammock that someone had offered. Then finally, I regained my

sea legs and began eating again. That was the end of my seasickness, and I was pretty damned hungry.

We slipped into a kind of timelessness on the deck of this boat – the blue, blue water of the Indian Ocean, the vast sky. If I remember correctly, I read the entire *Lord of the Ring* series on that trip, including *The Hobbit*. Peter and I also passed some time creating very elaborate board games. We created a version of battleship with extensive rules of engagement. The crew usually had a line hanging off the back of the boat on which they caught fish and often offered some to us. They also supplied us with rice. Rice and fish, I couldn't think of a better meal at that time.

A day or two before arriving in The Comoros, my chickens came home to roost. While standing off the side of the deck relieving myself, it was anything but a relief – burning pee. That is one very uncomfortable sensation. I knew immediately what it meant and thought back to my night in Mombasa harbor. We were out at sea and there was nothing I could do until we docked in Moroni, the capital and port of The Comoros.

In port after being cleared by immigration, I immediately went in search of a medical facility. I found a clinic being run by some very nice French nuns. They provided me with the necessary antibiotics and relief was gained. After a couple of days exploring Moroni and the beaches to the north, we were again on our way on the sea of timelessness.



## FROM THE LOWLANDS TO THE HIGHLANDS

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The coast of Madagascar was a sight to see, miles and miles of white beaches, palm trees with the mountains behind, and not a soul in sight. We pulled into a small village in the north of the country which had a French-run sugar mill. We were picking up cargo which would be dropped off in Majunga. There was a party at the company that night and we were invited by the French management. I don't think I have ever seen a group of guys as drunk as we were. We were all young lads and had been days at sea. The Comoros was a Muslim country so we didn't have any refreshments while there. Whiskey was the drink of choice. I've never been much of a hard alcohol drinker, which I reaffirmed that night.

The boat had navigated an estuary to the small village and in order to leave we had to time the tides exactly. We didn't, so ended up aground and leaning to one side. We had to wait for the next high tide. Another couple of days sailing down the Madagascar coast and we finally arrived in Majunga.



*The Port of Majunga*

Majunga is a dusty port town. This part of Madagascar is mostly made up of people of African and Arabic descent. All of the buildings were bleached white and reflected the hot sun. Peter and I were anxious to get on our way so we didn't linger long. We hitchhiked out of town. The journey from the coast to Antananarivo, Tana for short, is beautiful; from the dry desert landscape near Majunga to the highlands of central Madagascar. When you reach the highlands, you begin to see the terraced rice fields of the Malagasy. On the second to the last day, a French expat couple picked us up and offered us a room in their house for the night. Wine and cheese in the evening and an omelet in the morning were quite a treat after so many days at sea.

When Peter and I arrived in Tana we were quite shocked. First by the architecture – the city was built on hills and the houses were two stories high made with brick and had wooden balconies, unexpected in Africa. Apparently, some Scottish fellow helped plan the city and put his stamp on the look. Below the hills was a small lake surrounded by jacaranda trees. On one side of the lake was the Hilton Hotel, the only high-rise building in the country. But most surprising to us were the women. The highland Malagasy people are of Indo-Malay descent: long, straight, black hair; dark olive skin; and almond-shaped eyes. Considering we were off the S.E. coast of Africa, we were quite surprised. On that very first day wandering around the city, I heard myself say, “This is a place I could get stuck in for a while.” It proved itself true.

At that time (1973), very few travelers ventured through Madagascar, so those travelers who were living in Tana knew very quickly new blood was in town. We were introduced to an American with shoulder-length hair, about our age, named Derek. He was teaching English at the American Cultural Center. He offered us a place to stay until we found something else and mentioned they needed a substitute teacher for an evening class at the center. I explained that I had never taught before and he immediately reassured me that it didn't matter. “You just need to look over the lesson before you teach.” That was the beginning of my English teaching career. I substituted that evening and was offered a job for the next term which would begin in a month. We checked in with the American Embassy to let them know we were in town and also to get a recommendation for a doctor. The Consul General was a young, very light-skinned African American, a really nice guy; Skip

was his name. He pointed me towards the embassy doctor and welcomed us to Madagascar. There was an American NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) listening post on Madagascar at that time so a few American expats were living in Tana. The Malagasy doctor gave me antibiotics for the



*Jacaranda trees in Antananarivo (Tana)*

gonorrhoea and I was careful to explain I had already been given a dose in The Comoros but apparently not strong enough. I wanted to be sure to get a strong enough one this time so that I wouldn't have to come back again.

Well, I did have to go back again. It returned. So, so did I, to the doctor and got another dose. By this time, I was on my third dose of antibiotics and it was beginning to take its toll. After the third dose had run its course and I still wasn't rid of the gonorrhoea, I was wasted. And, my pee was no longer burning but it was brown. Somehow gonorrhoea had morphed into hepatitis. Probably what had happened is the antibiotics had played havoc with my liver and perhaps caused a reoccurrence of the hepatitis I had had several years earlier in the States. But regardless, my pee was brown and I couldn't stay awake nor eat a thing. Fortunately, we had met some French school teachers who were going on holiday and had offered us their flat while they were gone.

By this time, I knew I was going to stay in Madagascar to teach the next term, but Peter wanted to continue on to South Africa. After all, he had a friend waiting for him there, with work. He made arrangements for a flight to Johannesburg. Peter did stick around and look after me until I was on the road to recovery. I was pretty useless but amazingly only for a short while. The forced down time was an opportunity to read Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

After only a couple of weeks, I was getting better. We calculated what I owed Peter and I said I would send the money to him after I started working. By buying dollars on the black market, I managed to send all the money I owed him in pretty short order. I ended up staying two years in Madagascar, teaching and traveling, and it became a crucial point in my life.

What I found in Madagascar was a reconnection with life: living, being, enjoying. Life was good. Eventually there was a girlfriend, Voahangy, a beautiful Malagasy. She helped me find a big house to rent and many of the Center's English teachers ended up living there communally. We also had a room for the travelers coming through. Randy Dodge was on the top floor in a kind of attic space. Keenan, an American, wanted to have the verandah with his Malagasy girlfriend and I had the room on the other side of the wall from his verandah. One of my windows looked out into his space. There was also a New Zealander and an Australian. Randy's girlfriend was named Rickey, a very young, extremely beautiful and smart Malagasy girl. I think she was 18 or 19 at the time. She was one of my English students from book two through book six and into the advanced class.

Voahangy didn't need to be an English student. Her English was perfect. She was my age and a doctor. Her sister was married to another of the center's teachers, and in fact it was he who I replaced.

Unfortunately, I had to share Voahangy. She already had a boyfriend when I met her at a party at Skip's, the American Consul General. Her boyfriend worked for the FOA, the United Nation's Organization for Forestry and Agriculture, and so was always traveling around the island, fortunately. We spent the time together that we could.

I had two visitors from Kansas City while in Madagascar. The first was a previous girlfriend. It was terribly awkward. Our relationship had finished a year before I left the States, although I did visit her on the way out. It was very difficult

for me and extremely uncomfortable for her. I just couldn't pretend. It didn't help that she had put on 20 or 30 pounds since I had last seen her, but really, we were done. I hoped she would meet a Malagasy guy. She didn't stay very long. The second was someone who I didn't really know very well. We had gone to high school together and she was one year behind me. She had a great time and became a teacher and stayed quite some time. I don't remember if she left Madagascar before me or after. Her name is Donna Price. We'll meet up again.

It was the assassination of President Ratsimandrava on February 5, 1975, that set off a series of events that would eventually lead to my leaving Madagascar. The killing was blamed on a political group from the coast and the battle raged in Antananarivo for days. For a couple of days, we all just stayed in the house and listened to the gunfire. I remember running to the bathroom and ducking under the windows, just in case shots came through. Actually, we found it quite exhilarating. We had never been in a coup d'état before and were young and thought we were invincible. When the shooting died down, we went out on the street to survey the situation and had to run for cover into the American Embassy when the shooting started up again. We spent the night at the embassy and a great



*Antananarivo (Tana)*

bond was formed with everyone there: the marine guards, the staff, and us traveler teachers. A curfew was established and we had to change the hours of our classes and begin at 6:00 a.m. in order to be able to close before curfew.

During the curfew, one night I went home with a lady expecting to stay the night only to find she wasn't a she but a he. The curfew had already begun and I found myself out on the street when I shouldn't be. Fortunately, one of my students was a Colonel in the Gendarmes, and it was he who drove by in a jeep and kindly dropped me off at home.

The political scene was very unsettled for months and every Malagasy who could was making plans to go to France. After Didier Ratsiraka was installed as the President in June, things got even dicier, especially for the Americans. He was much more of a socialist and had strong ties to both China and Russia. It was known he would be closing the NASA post so all of the Americans working there started making plans too.

In the middle of the fighting in Tana between the rival factions, the prison just outside of town was closed and all of the inmates were released. They were to be interred at a later date when it was safer. One of the beneficiaries of this situation was an American businessman, George Reppas. He had been arrested for some kind of fraud involving his business exporting Malagasy beef. Apparently, they were contrived charges in order to get him out of the picture so that his Malagasy partners could take over the business. He had kept himself fit in his tiny cell by practicing yoga daily. Because of the closing of the prison, he had been released into the care of the American Embassy who was responsible for his whereabouts. He was staying in a room somewhere in Tana and had a young Malagasy girlfriend who had looked me up. By this time, the semester at the Cultural Center had finished and I was planning a trip to Mauritius and La Reunion.

The expat scene in Antananarivo at that time was very small and everyone knew just about everyone else and what they were up to. George's girlfriend, who coincidentally was leaving the island with her family, which was a jazz group, and also going to La Reunion, proposed that somehow, I help George escape from Madagascar. He had made some arrangements for a boat to pick him up from Majunga in the north. We made arrangements that he go with a friend of ours who had rented a car and would drive him up to Majunga while myself and a buddy

would make our way south to Fort Dauphin, where we could catch a boat to La Reunion. Because everyone knew that Ginger, my Australian buddy, and I were going to Fort Dauphin, we thought that it would act as a decoy for George.

Ginger and I hitchhiked to the south of the country. Southern Madagascar is very rugged terrain with terrible roads, even today. In Fort Dauphin, there was an American school operated by the American Lutheran Church, and was a place American expats went for R & R. When George went missing, and knowing that Ginger and I were traveling to Fort Dauphin, the embassy assumed that he was with us and figured they would get hold of him there.

When Ginger and I arrived at the American School after traveling for several days everyone asked us where George Reppas was. But by that time, he had slipped out of the country in the north. It was only the next year when I returned to the States that I heard the full story from George. He did manage to escape onto the awaiting boat after somewhat of a hair-raising chase. Randy Dodge and I had lunch with him in San Francisco. He was meeting a movie producer who he was trying to convince to make a movie of his great escape. Recently I googled George Reppas and found that he is still pursuing his dream of making the movie and had started a production company. Good luck George.



*An Arab dhow off the coast of Majunga*

Note: I received the following email from George Reppas and so will let him correct the record.

*Good hearing from you, I always wondered what has happened to you and your Madagascar commune friends.*

*Craig Jones, our camp archivist, did a search of my name and ran across a section of your story. It was not quite right.*

*We were not released, as you wrote, but I took a chance that I would not be shot if I walked into the fire between the FRS and the army, and I took Professor Hercourt with me. When we got through the women prisoners followed and then the rest. I had instructed our guys to let the Molotov cocktails fly before leaving. They didn't do a thorough job and that's why the prison was back in repair after 6-weeks.*

*At the US embassy I hooked up with Slater, a British agent, and he coordinated with Jackie Cauvin who had a trimaran in Majunga. You guys did the fake ID and lined up the Swiss driver that got us through. The Malagasy sent a hitman to the Comoros apparently to either bring me back or to hit, but he was stopped by Interpol and they took him away. I never saw any of them again, obviously lined up by The State Department.*

*Your story did not have it right, but I recognized that it was done by someone who knew but was without all the facts.*

*George*



## THE TALE OF A RING-TAIL

---



*Ring-tailed lemur*

When I returned to Madagascar from Mauritius, I encouraged Andre, a Malagasy guy who had run the reception at the Cultural Center, to leave Madagascar. He was a fine musician and I encouraged him to go to La Reunion and join up with the jazz family. I knew it was very difficult for someone to leave their native land, especially the first time, so I encouraged him as much as I could. In fact, eventually, he did make the jump. The only thing I ever heard about him was from Ginger, the guy

I went to Fort Dauphin and traveled on to La Reunion with. I received a letter from him telling me that he had run into Andre in Bombay. I don't know anything more about what happened to him. I wish you the best Andre.

I had made plans to teach one more term at the Center, after returning to Madagascar and making a trip to Tulear in the southwest of the country. This was a solo trip for me, and on this trip, I met one of my best friends in Madagascar. I traveled to the south by my usual means of transport, hitchhiking. While waiting for the next ride out of a small village, I was offered a ring-tailed lemur for sale. He was a young male that they had on a rope leash. I paid not more than a couple of dollars, if that. Still, that didn't make me any less annoyed when shortly after buying him he got away and went up a tree. Eventually, he was retrieved. I was sure that his fate with me would be better than it would be staying around that village. When the next truck came through town, Maki, which is what I decided to call him because that's the Malagasy word for this kind of lemur, and I headed out. I kept hold of his leash and he kept hold of my hair, perched on my shoulders, his back feet on my shoulders and his chin resting on the top of my head with his little primate hands holding my hair.

Ring-tailed lemurs also like to sit in their own yoga posture. They sit up straight with their arms outstretched and palms facing outwards, as if they are warming their hands. I saw Maki do this in front of a fire made to keep us warm while traveling with the trucks and I also saw him do it many times as the sun was setting.

Lemurs are unique to Madagascar. This is because they developed before Madagascar split off from the African coast and also before predators evolved. This left them in relative safety on the island of Madagascar, whereas on the African continent they were wiped out. I always describe them as part dog, part cat, and of course, part monkey. The monkey part is obvious: the tail, climbing in trees, jumping from tree to tree. Their fur is soft like a cat, not at all coarse and they make a sound that is quite similar to purring. As to the dog similarity: they make a kind of dog bark and their heads are more dog like. Ring-tails have an elongated snout much more like a dog.

We made friends right away. Well not right away, first we had a crisis. We were walking down a dusty trail and he kept holding onto my hair. This was a habit that I was trying to break. In a moment of unawareness and annoyance, I pulled on the leash and almost threw Maki to the ground. The entire world came to a halt. I was shocked and he was shocked. He remained still and I prayed that he was okay. After what seemed like a few minutes, but was probably no more than a few

seconds, he revived. After that I never lost my temper with Maki again and he never pulled on my hair.

When it was time to return to Tana, I took a train from Fianarantsoa. I had to hide Maki under my clothes because one was not allowed to travel with a lemur. He was very accommodating. He just snuggled up and no one knew about the secret passenger. At our house in Tana, he was not kept on a leash and was free to roam the neighborhood, much to the dismay of some of our neighbors. He did like to go in through their windows and help himself to fruit. But mostly the neighbors were quite fond of Maki. In general, the Malagasy respect their forest friends. The endangering of the lemur population is not due to a direct threat from humans but the indirect threat of loss of habitat. At night Maki slept with me, lying above my head on the pillow.

One day Maki went missing. Voahangy and I walked the neighborhood with her asking everyone if they had seen him. We could follow his path with one person pointing us on to the next that had seen him. We eventually found him. Some Malagasy had become too fond of him and had tied him up. He was happy to be liberated. When I left Madagascar, I entrusted Maki to the lady who shopped and cooked lunch for us. She had grown very fond of him. Unfortunately, Maki used to like to tease dogs. They would charge him and he would jump straight up in the air about four feet high and they would run through where he had just been.



*This could be Maki*

When he landed the dog would turn around for another go. Apparently, he did this once too often and a dog got hold of him by the back and gave him a pretty good bite. He died from the wound. Rest in peace, Maki.

## KOPAN AND KATHMANDU

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It was the most amazing New Year ever, crossing into Nepal in a bullock cart at sunrise. The sky was ablaze, the haze and dust in the air heightened the reds and oranges of the sun. It was New Year's Day 1976, sure to be a super year, and as it turned out, it was.

During that last term in Madagascar, I had heard from my friend Peter. He was now in Nepal studying Tibetan Buddhism with Lama Yeshe at the Kopan Monastery in Kathmandu. Randy Dodge, who was still living at the house,

was attracted to going to India and Nepal. He had been practicing Yoga for several years and was also interested in Buddhism. I was interested in Nepal but somehow fearful of India. I knew deep down that it could grab me and not let me go. By this time, Voahangy had gone to Brussels to join her U.N. boyfriend. Rickey was making arrangements to go to university in France. Randy and I were busy

changing Malagasy francs into U.S. dollars with the Indian money changers and making preparations for our trip to the sub-continent.

Randy and I had discovered there was an Indian passenger ship that traveled from Mauritius to Bombay and so made plans to go to Mauritius and leave for India from there. I said goodbye to my home for two years and a people that will forever hold a special place in my heart.

Thirty-three years after first arriving in Madagascar, I finally made a trip back with my wife Amido in 2006. She loves the place as much as I do. Many things looked the same, although Tana was a bit of a shock. In 1975, the population of Madagascar was around eight million; in 2006, it was sixteen million and most of those are now in Tana. I have never seen so many kids.

The ship we took had several classes of travel. I think Randy and I took the next to last. It was not too bad really, dormitory style with bunk beds. The food was good. There was both a vegetarian line and a non-vegetarian line. We used the vegetarian line for lunch and dinner and the non-veg for breakfast because we wanted eggs. The trip took several days, and on the way, we were treated to Indian movies. That was the first time I had ever seen a Bollywood production. Treated is probably not very accurate because the sound system was terrible and it was way too loud. The days were spent on the deck watching the sea go by and reading Hermann Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game*. So, after another trip across the Indian Ocean we arrived in Bombay, India.

In Bombay, we stayed at the Salvation Army Hostel. On the streets were quite a few wasted westerners wandering around. We didn't really expect that to be our fate but it was a good heads up. We were both interested in getting to Nepal as soon as possible and decided to take a train out to a good place to begin hitchhiking from. We didn't see any reason why we couldn't hitch in India. On our very first ride we had a surprise. A truck stopped. It was open in the back and we just needed to climb up and jump in. We threw our backpacks over the rail and climbed up and landed in a truck bed of manure. It wasn't very wet so we just shrugged our shoulders and we were on our way.

After a couple of days travelling, we were ready to enter Nepal. We had arrived in the border town too late to be able to cross that day. We would have to wait for

the next day. It just happened to be New Year's Eve. I don't think we participated in any festivities but just awaited our trip into Nepal in the morning.



*Kathmandu, Nepal*

After arriving in Kathmandu, we found our way to Freak Street where I knew Peter was staying in a guest house. Randy and Peter had never met. Peter had already left Madagascar by the time Randy showed up. Peter was very much into his exploration of Tibetan Buddhism. He was involved in a course that was being offered at the Kopan Monastery on the outskirts of the city. One day we went with him to visit and had a short chat with Lama Yeshe over a cup of tea. He offered his cup which we shared. He was a very kind man with a boyish grin. There were many westerners involved in the meditation teachings at the time but for some reason I wasn't drawn to joining.

Randy and I went on to Pokhara in order to do a trek. In those days Pokhara hadn't really become a big scene like it is today. On the edge of Lake Phewa were a few guest houses. Nearby was a Tibetan refugee camp and so a few Tibetans would set up on the paths and sell their goods. I bought a Tibetan mala and some pieces of coral with holes drilled in them for stringing on a mala. The guest house

was very simple but I remember a nice garden and of course the views were incredible of both the lake and the majestic Himalayas, a truly idyllic scene. There was a Japanese couple staying in the guest house that I noticed. She was very sweet and soft and he was intense with the stern look of a samurai. I would meet this couple again and they would get new names and become Geeta and Asanga.



## OSHO AND THE SIXTEENTH KARMAPA

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*His Holiness the Sixteenth Karmapa*

The first time I heard the name Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was on a bus from Pokhara to Kathmandu. My friend Randy (who had traveled with me to India and Nepal from Madagascar) and I were trekking on the Annapurna route and reached the point where we decided to turn around. Ben and his girlfriend Kathy (actually I'm not sure of their names but will refer to them as Ben and Kathy from here on out) were coming down the path and said they had run into snow. Being ill-equipped, without even sleeping bags, the decision was choiceless. We all spent the night in a teahouse.

There seemed to be some tension between Ben and Kathy. They were both involved in Tibetan Buddhist practice but it seemed that Ben was keener than Kathy and this was causing some friction.

On the bus ride back to Kathmandu, Ben and I sat together and Randy and Kathy sat together with a growing chemistry. Ben told me about his experience doing a Tibetan Buddhist meditation retreat at the Kopan Monastery in Kathmandu. Randy and I had visited Kopan a week or so earlier with another friend from Madagascar and had had the good fortune to have a cup of tea with the head lama, Lama Yeshe. He was a very sweet man and enormously generous. But as I explained to Ben, I wasn't finding myself attracted to the Tibetan Buddhist practice. In fact, the words that I heard come out of my mouth as we talked were,



“I’m looking for something more universal and more personal.” For one thing, it was the limitation of the “ism” in Buddhism that turned me away. My own intuitive spiritual sky was wide open and did not want to be confined to a container, however much I respected the teachings.

Ben told me that I should pay a visit to the ashram of a guru in India named Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and proceeded to give me the address. Ben had met one of Rajneesh’s sannyasins recently while he was on a visa run and so was visiting Nepal in order to return to India with a new visa. This sannyasin named Devanand had impressed him, and what he heard about Rajneesh interested him, but he was quite immersed in the Tibetan Buddhist dharma. So, I put the piece of paper with the address away in my wallet. The bus ride took a few hours and so Ben and I had quite a long chat. He was a sincere practitioner, perhaps I thought, a bit too serious, but regardless we had a very nice connection.

When we arrived back in Kathmandu, both Ben and Kathy returned to Kopan to continue their practice and Randy and I stayed in a guest house. Randy and I were intending to spend a couple more weeks in Kathmandu and so found a room in a private house. It was a lovely situation because the house had a walled garden and so offered a retreat from the daily busyness of the city. This house was closer to the Tibetan Swayambhu Monastery which we liked to visit.

We had learned that a very important Tibetan Buddhist teacher was coming to Kathmandu soon to perform an Empowerment Ceremony and this event was to take place at Swayambhu. I wasn’t really sure what an Empowerment Ceremony was but it sounded interesting. Unfortunately, we also learned that it was only open to practicing Buddhists.

The day of the event I spent meditating in our room. It was a silent, cool oasis. We were close enough to the monastery to hear the Tibetan horns, and in my meditation, I felt a humming sensation in the area of my heart.

During our time in Kathmandu both Randy and I became interested in Satya Sai Baba. He was quite popular with the Hindu Nepalis and his photo and books were everywhere. I was intrigued by the possibility of a “living” Master. I had been introduced to Meher Baba seven years before, six months, however, after he had passed away, so the idea of meeting a living Buddha very much appealed to me.

Randy and I decided to end our traveling partnership. We had different schedules. I wanted to go to India and head south and possibly meet Sai Baba. Randy wanted to do the same, but he had become involved in a torrid affair with Kathy that hadn't burned itself out. We bid our farewells with the idea that we would meet up at the Sai Baba ashram which was in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh.

Note: I will now intersperse my story with a letter I received from my friend Randy (Narayanadeva) after sharing what I had written of our journey in Nepal and India.

*Dear Purushottama,*

*What a flash from the past. Thank you for this. It brings so much back. Your memory is like a video recording. My memory is patchy with particular moments fuzzily framed. If you don't mind, I want to share what I can.*

*I believe if we hadn't stopped where we had at that last village at 10,000 feet that we would have gotten into serious trouble. There was a group with a broken leg still on the snowed-in trail was the story.*

*I remember the couple. The name Ben comes to mind and I can't remember the name of the girl, Kathy is very close. This was a significant time.*

*She was from the east coast, living in an artists and musicians commune, a photographer and roadie with Jethro Tull, I think. The social and other experiments she participated in at such a tender age, this boy from Nebraska was challenged to comprehend. In this respect she was much more worldly, wiser than me, an elder in a killer 20 something body.*

*She was also the first lover in my life where the center of gravity and conversations were about spirituality, Buddha's teachings in particular, and how to reconcile our limited understanding with what we saw in the monasteries and monks, which was then followed by the most present lovemaking for me up to that time. We flew high, were consumed with each other, and parted consciously in mid bubble, purposely in crescendo. I review that time with joy and sadness. It is hard to think of that extraordinary woman and time without sometimes tearing. She was finished traveling, wanted to return to her art. I knew I didn't want to go back to anything. I was sure I wanted to go forward. We knew but unspoken that to go further would have brought reality into the mix. We wanted to say goodbye in full bloom. Things like that were*

*easier in your 20's. I must say probably the most bittersweet, intense affair I ever remember in a life riddled with less meaningful affairs.*

*I remember spending the winter in Kathmandu immersing myself in everything I could about the Buddha's teaching, going to the temples, hanging with the monks, partaking in the local produce followed by the pie shops. I was completely blown away and still am today about the psychology, the profound understanding of the science of the mind, but could not get my head around the asceticism. Why the monks, western included had to walk around in winter without shoes or why the poor food needed to be covered in flies. Also, the live translations of the Lama's discourses by some very severe and grim western types. If there was any juice in the teaching, these translators sucked it out and everything was completely lost in translation. I knew for me to go deeper I needed to be able to listen and speak about all this in my tongue.*

*This is also where the timing gets confused. I do not remember you during that winter. I remember attending the Karmapa's Black Hat ceremony after spending those cold months in study. This is when I had the most profound experience with him.*

*The ceremony lasted several days. There were many westerners mingled with the overflowing crowds of Tibetans. The first few days I could not get into the hall but stood outside with the multitudes listening and catching glimpses through the barred windows of the pageantry.*

*There was one day that I did get in and sat with a few other westerners along with it seemed several hundred monks with the Karmapa on a podium doing chants and mudras. The monks deep toned chanting in response, the horns, the incense, I got completely stoned. When it was over, I lingered. The hall was clearing out. I stood in the middle looking up at all the hanging tangkas. I turned around, a few people parted and there was the Karmapa sitting alone on his dais looking at me with an inviting smile a few meters away. I was so shy and not sure what to do. I smiled, bowed and retreated.*

*The next day I could not get in. I was peering through the open-air barred window being jostled back and forth by the crowds feeling the music and chanting; suddenly the Karmapa was at the window looking directly at me about 50 centimeters away. He had been making the rounds inside, blessing everyone in the hall. He looked in my eyes and smiled. He threw water on my face and these words came into my head "Don't worry, this path is not for everyone" Then he was gone.*

*I was so shocked. This was the confirmation. Whenever I think of this, I feel I was blessed by this very extraordinary being. How he got those words clearly into a very confused mind was magical.*

*It was not long afterward that I headed south and planned to go to Sai Baba's ashram as we had planned, on my way to Madras before heading back to the states. As you remember we gave Sai Baba magical powers and were convinced he was going to help us financially.*

*I got to Bombay and stayed at the Salvation Army behind the Taj Mahal hotel. The very place you and I stayed on our first nights in India coming by boat for 10 days from Madagascar and Mauritius. Do you remember waking up to the Shiva Babas with their pythons and cobras, the junkies some dyed from head to toe in blue, including one with a blue dog, the color of the local antiseptic? What a circus before we took a train to the edge of town and hitched our way to Nepal. Do you remember the time a truck stopped for us and we threw our packs into the back, climbed up and jumped into a truck full of cow shit along with our packs? Do you remember all the chillum brakes at the roadside temples? Or the nights in small villages waking up to thousands of the same face staring at us with vacant eyes and all with small pocked scars, village after village the same?*

When I was in New Delhi, I heard that there was a Meher Baba center and so I visited during one of their open evenings. Upon hearing I was on my way to visit Satya Sai Baba, an older Baba lover suggested that I go see a rebel of a guru named Rajneesh. I remembered the name and said I did have in mind possibly stopping there as well. He told me the Rajneesh ashram was in Poona, just a couple of hours by train from Bombay. He also said although Satya Sai Baba was not in Poona, there was some kind of Baba center there. At this point, it became clear to me I would indeed head to Poona.

Walking out of the Poona train station, I found a rickshaw and told the driver to take me to the Sai Baba center. I said, "Sai Baba center, not Rajneesh ashram." "Yes, yes," he replied. I had decided that I would first go to the Sai Baba center and then check out the Rajneesh ashram.

As we got nearer and nearer to our destination, I saw increasing numbers of young western people dressed in orange clothes. By this time, I had been exposed to a couple of Rajneesh sannyasins and so recognized what I was seeing. We arrived at a large gate and on the top was written Shree Rajneesh Ashram. A large, blonde, German fellow greeted me and I heard myself say, "I don't think I am where I was going, but I know that I'm in the right place."

The first thing I read from Osho (I will now begin to refer to Rajneesh by the name he took only a few months before leaving this planet) spoke directly to me. There was no space, no separation between the words and my self, an immediacy. It was clear within days that I would not be going on to the Sai Baba ashram; I had found the living Master I was looking for. I arrived just weeks before a major celebration day, March 21<sup>st</sup>, honoring Osho's day of Enlightenment. I took initiation, became a sannyasin and did a couple of groups. During this time, I read one of Osho's books called *The Silent Explosion*. At the very end of the book was the story of an Indian sannyasin who had gone to Sikkim and visited the Karmapa at his Rumtek Monastery. This was the same Lama that had been in Kathmandu months earlier. I had learned that he was highly respected in the Tibetan Buddhist community and was on par with or even more highly regarded than the Dalai Lama.

This is the story that was recounted:

*In 1972, Swami Govind Siddharth, an Osho sannyasin, visited the Tibetan Lama Karmapa, who had fled from Tibet and who at that time lived in his Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim. When Siddharth arrived, accompanied by his wife and two young daughters, the monastery was completely closed. In an interview at the time, he told of his initial disappointment at not meeting the Karmapa. Then all of a sudden, one monk came running out to tell him that he was immediately wanted inside by His Holiness. He went in and was greeted by the Karmapa as if he was expected there. The Karmapa never even knew anything about him beforehand as he had not made an appointment . . . he knew nothing about him except that he was dressed in the faded orange of early neo-sannyas.*

*Of Lama Karmapa, it was said he was a 'Divine Incarnation,' a Bodhisattva. In Tibet, they believe that whosoever attains to Buddhahood, and then by their own wishes is born again to help people in the world is a divine incarnation – Bodhisattva. His Holiness was said to be the sixteenth incarnation of Dsum Khyenpa, the first Karmapa, who was born about 1110 AD.*

*When Swami Siddharth first entered, the Karmapa immediately told him that he knew where he was from. He said, "I am seeing that you have somewhere some photograph or something which is printed on two sides, of your Master." Siddharth answered that he had nothing like that which is printed on two sides. He had completely forgotten about the locket hanging from his mala with Osho's photograph on both sides! There was an English woman who was acting as an interpreter*

since the Lama Karmapa did not speak English. She immediately saw his mala and said, "What is this?" He then remembered that the locket was printed on two sides and he said, "This is the photograph of my Master." She was curious to see it, so Siddharth took it off and showed it to her.

Immediately, the Karmapa said, "That is it." He took the locket of Osbo in his hand and he touched it to his forehead and then said: "He is the greatest incarnation since Buddha in India – he is a living Buddha!" The Karmapa went on to say, "You may be feeling that he is speaking for you, but it is not only for you that he speaks. Rajneesh speaks for the Akashic records also, the records of events and words recorded on the astral planes. Whatever is spoken is not forgotten. That is why you will find that he goes on repeating things and you will feel that he

is doing this for you, but, as a matter of fact, he speaks only for a few people. Only a few people realize who Rajneesh is. His words will remain there in the Akashic records, so that they will also be helpful to people in the future."



Rumtek Monastery, Sikkim, India

The Karmapa went on to say that Osbo had been with Siddharth in past lives. "If you want to see one of Rajneesh's previous incarnations – who he was in Tibet – you can go to Tibet and see his golden statue there which is preserved in the Hall of Incarnations." He continued to chat about Osbo and his work, "My blessings are always there, and I know that whatever we are not going to be able to do to help others, Rajneesh will do." He explained that one of the main aims of the Lamas in coming to India was to preserve their occult sciences. Osbo from his side also confirmed this in his Kashmir lectures given in 1969. He said then, "The Dalai Lama has not escaped only to save himself, but to save the Tibetan religion, the meditation secrets and the occult sciences."

*The Karmapa went on to explain, "We have gotten these things from India in the past, and now we want to return them back. Now we have come to know that here is an incarnation, Rajneesh, who is doing our job in India and the world, and we are very happy about it. The world will know him, but only a few people will realize what he actually is. He will be the only person who can guide properly, who can be a World Teacher in this age, and he had taken birth only for this purpose."*

When I read this story, I was very skeptical because all devotees of gurus like to exaggerate the importance of their teachers. Although I believed the story must be based on some truth, I could not be sure what the Karmapa thought about Osho.

In the meantime, I had written to my friend Randy to tell him about Osho and the ashram and had sent it to American Express, Delhi, where I knew he would pick up mail. One day I went into the ashram office to check for a response and as I was walking down the steps leaving, coming through the gate was my friend Randy. He had never received my letter but had learned of Osho on his own.

Narayanadeva's letter continues:

*Anyway, I returned to Bombay to catch a boat to Goa and then planned to go to Sai Baba by land. I needed to get something to read. The best bookstore I knew was at the Taj Mahal Hotel. I went to the section on psychology and religion. I was browsing when I swear this book fell on my big toe. Archarya Rajneesh was the title. The first page mentioned that he gave lectures in English and lived in Poona only one day away.*

*Getting there, first person I meet is you. And our stories join and the rest is history.*

*Brother, we shared some amazing times together. I have forgotten so many of them. It is a complete delight to hear from you with your photographic memory of those days. We were so lucky. I am so grateful for that time.*

*Much Love to you my fellow traveler.*

*Narayanadeva a.k.a. Randy*

I had by this time realized my time traveling outside of the States was coming to an end. Taking sannyas was a new beginning for me and to be honest I wanted to return to my hometown and share this remarkable discovery. I had received a

name for a meditation center that I would start. Randy (whose name had become Narayanadeva by this point) and I said our farewells again with approximately the same plans to return to the States by going east from India through Thailand but with slightly different time frames.

On the plane from Bombay to Calcutta, I sat next to a Tibetan Buddhist monk. He didn't speak a word of English but there we were – he in his maroon robes and me in my orange clothes.

It might have been the first or second night of my stay in a Sutter Street guesthouse in Calcutta when I walked Ben, the American Tibetan Buddhist who had given me the contact info for Osho. I was very happy to see him. I had thought about him many times and was so grateful for his sharing and I wanted to tell him what I had found. We talked a bit and then he told me that coincidentally the Karmapa was in Calcutta and he was going to see him the next day at the Oberoi Hotel. He invited me to go with him. I was delighted. For one thing in the back of my mind was the Rumtek story and so I thought I would be able to see what the Karmapa actually did think about Osho for myself.

The Karmapa's room was a corner one and Ben and I approached from one hallway. As we neared, we could see an Indian sannyasin couple in orange approaching from the other direction. He was dressed in a *lungi* and had a very long beard and long hair. She was dressed in an orange sari. They were Osho sannyasins and ran the Calcutta Osho center.

We all entered the room and were shown to seats just in front of the Karmapa, who was seated on a sofa. He was immensely childlike, full of love and innocence and looked to be always on the verge of a good chuckle. He sat stroking the beard of the Indian sannyasin who was sitting slightly to his right. This in itself would have been enough to let me know what he thought of Osho but it was not all. Sitting next to him on the sofa, he had propped up a copy of Sannyas Magazine (published at the ashram) with a photo of Osho beaming out on to our group.

At that point it did not matter whether the story I had read was factual or not, I could see the connection between the Karmapa and Osho. That space out of which the Karmapa and the photo of Osho appeared was One.

Of course, I had related the story to Ben when we met in Calcutta, but after the meeting at the Oberoi, we didn't talk of it again. We were invited to a private Black



Crown (Empowerment) Ceremony that was taking place at the home of a wealthy Indian woman later that evening. This is the same ceremony that took place months earlier at the Swayambhu Monastery in Kathmandu that I had not been able to attend.

One of the first people I met after arriving at the house was the Tibetan monk who had sat next to me on the flight. As it turned out, he had been traveling to join up with the Karmapa and return with him to Rumtek. He was as surprised as I was.

The ceremony was penetrating; to be in a room with Tibetan horns blaring is in itself a transformative experience. After the ceremony the few westerners that were there, I think we were maybe five, were invited into a side room where the Karmapa gave a teaching on Tilopa's *Song of Mahamudra*. This is the most important text of the Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. Osho had himself given a discourse series published as *Tantra: The Supreme Understanding* on this text and I was traveling with the book.

Because the Karmapa didn't speak English, he had a translator, but his translator told us he was having a very difficult time translating this teaching into English. He was frustrated but the Karmapa was understanding and compassionate. This experience highlighted for me one of the advantages of having a teacher who spoke English. Osho's words did not need to be translated and we were able to hear them directly without a filter.

I am grateful for having had the opportunity to first spend some time with the Karmapa and then to take part in this mysterious ceremony. It was the only time I met the Karmapa. But my wife Amido and I did have a chance in 2006 to visit the Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, where his relics are housed today.

## FROM MEHER BABA WITH LOVE

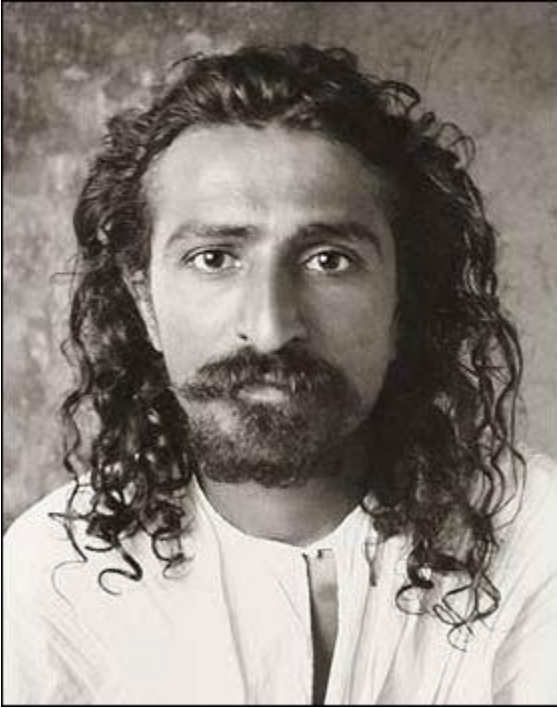
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As the rickshaw pulled to a stop, I looked up and read the sign at the top of the gate – Shree Rajneesh Ashram. Quite a large fellow with a German accent (Haridas) greeted me and I heard myself say, “I’m not where I was going, but I’m sure I am in the right place.” At the Poona train station, I had told the rickshaw driver, “Sai Baba Ashram, not Rajneesh Ashram.” He responded, “Yes, yes, baba.” Mistakenly I had been told there was a Sai Baba Ashram as well as a Rajneesh Ashram in Poona and so I thought I would be able to visit both but had decided to start with the Sai Baba Ashram.

As soon as I stepped out of the rickshaw – I knew there had been **no** mistake. After only a day or so, I went to the front office and asked Arup for a Sannyas Darshan. In fact, I showed her I already had a mala; I just needed Bhagwan’s photo attached. I arrived wearing a Tibetan mala I had bought from Tibetan refugees in Pokhara, Nepal, and all green Indian clothes. Later I heard Osho say green was the color of the Sufis. I looked Arup straight in the eye and asked if she couldn’t

see I was already a sannyasin. She was not impressed and so I was instructed to do the meditations.



My first exposure to meditation was through Meher Baba. Interestingly enough, in the book *Dimensions Beyond the Known*, Osho says Meher Baba and he had used the same meditation technique. It had been seven years earlier, while selling Kansas City Free Press newspapers on a street corner on the Country Club Plaza, that I had been introduced to Meher Baba. An older fellow named Charlie walked up to me and started telling me about him. We walked over to a coffee shop and I learned about this modern-day Master who was from Poona, India, and who had dropped his

body six months earlier.

My connection to Meher Baba was totally a heart connection. I had tried to read his book *God Speaks* but was unable to take it in. I had totally forgotten Meher Baba was from Poona, but it was the connection to Meher Baba that took me to Poona, both for the Shree Rajneesh Ashram and looking for the Sai Baba Ashram. The interest in Sai Baba stemmed mostly from the fact one of Meher Baba's Masters was Sai Baba of Shirdi and this current Sai Baba was proclaiming to be a reincarnation of him.

While staying at the Sunder Lodge, I met a beautiful German sannyasin named Gatha and we established a nice connection. After being in Poona for some time, she asked me how I was feeling. I remember telling her, "I'm more in love than I have ever been in my life." I felt I was swimming in love. When I told her of my meeting with Arup, she suggested I go with her and see Laxmi who was a friend

of hers and also Arup's boss. Because Enlightenment Day was nearing, the soonest I could get an appointment for a Sannyas Darshan was March 28<sup>th</sup>, exactly one week after Osho's Enlightenment Day celebration on March 21<sup>st</sup>.

On the day of the celebration of Osho's Enlightenment I was aware of the anticipation of the unknown. I had only seen Osho in discourse and had not had a darshan (a face-to-face meeting with him with only a small group present) so I really did not know what to expect but could feel a heightened energy around. I also remember consciously taking myself inwards. I wanted to be as present as possible for that first meeting. I spent the entire day not meditating but "being"



*Kundalini meditation*

meditation. I was aware of all the emotions, thoughts, and even body sensations that were visiting but I stayed anchored in that heart space where one is just *being*.

I believe 1976 was the last year that Celebration Darshans were held in Chuang Tzu Auditorium before moving to the much larger space of Buddha Hall. In that time on Celebration Days, people filed into Chuang Tzu past Bhagwan for darshan. I remember standing in the queue which was long and stretched out towards the front gate. We began lining up in daylight but it was dark before I finally arrived at Osho's chair. Music was playing during the entire time. As I

neared the entrance to Chuang Tzu, a beautiful female voice was singing Elton John's "Love Song," so appropriate as I was sinking deeper and deeper into *heartfulness*.

*"Love is the opening door  
Love is what we came here for  
No one could offer you more  
Do you know what I mean?  
Have your eyes really seen?"*

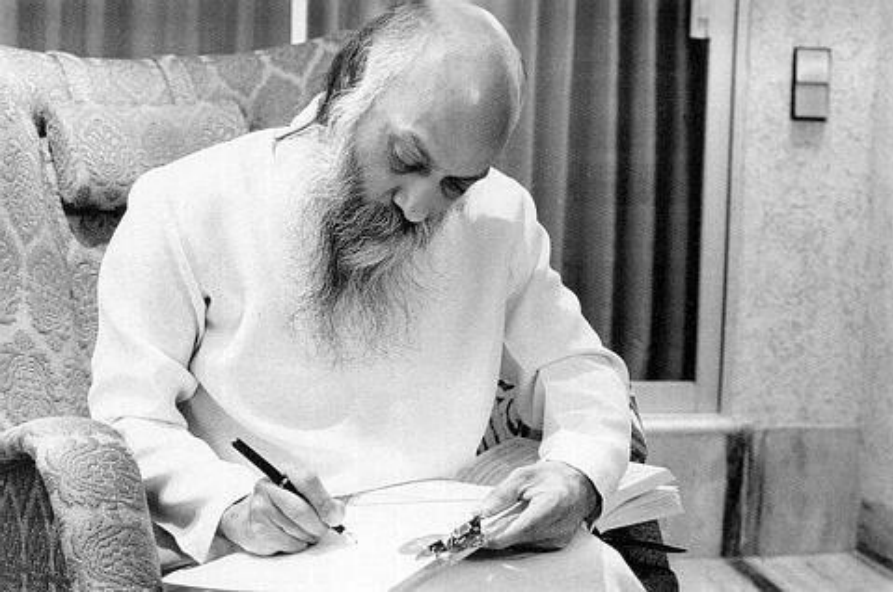
Just as my space in the line reached the entrance to Chuang Tzu, the music changed dramatically and became high energy drumming. This increased the excitement and anticipation tenfold. It still was not possible to actually see Osho because of the crowd in front.

Finally, I arrived and it was my turn to approach Osho. What followed I still see as if looking through a dream. It was as if some body memory took over. In front of him I bowed down and touched his feet, and then my body made motions as if it was pouring water from his feet to my head and this happened several times, then my hands folded in Namaste. When my hands touched, it was as if a circuit had been completed and I felt what can only be described as a powerful electric current circulating between my hara (area around the navel) and my hands clasped in front. My body then went limp but I did not lose consciousness and simply watched what unfolded. The same German sannyasin I had met at the gate on my arrival was there, Haridas. He slung me over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes (but very lovingly), carried me out of the auditorium and placed me outside the gate on the ground to gather myself. I had met my Master, a living Buddha.

My sannyas darshan was still one week away and as one could imagine I didn't know what to expect. Would it be even more powerful? As it turned out it was rather anticlimactic. I followed two Americans who received the names Milarepa and Marpa. Then it was my turn – he told me my name, Swami Prem Purushottama, and asked if it would be easy to pronounce. He said, "Prem means

love and Purushottama means God. So, love of God or God of love." He then asked how long I would be staying and that was it.

To this day, I do not know what the "current" experience was, perhaps some



*Osho giving sannyas*

of our Indian friends can explain, but to me it was my true initiation. Hence, in some ways I have two sannyas birthdays. Somehow by keeping it to myself all these years, it has not been able to be what it is, just another naturally ordinary experience with the extraordinary. Now I set it free.

Thank you, Osho. Your Enlightenment that took place so many years ago made each of our own experiences possible. Your sannyasins are eternally grateful.

A few days after my sannyas darshan, I walked out of Sunder Lodge and made a right turn. Up to that time, I had always turned left. The first building I came to was a memorial to Meher Baba. All the while, I had been staying next door to the Guru Prasad Apartments which is the spot where Meher Baba held his East-West Gatherings. At that moment Meher Baba and Osho were One. Tears of gratitude flowed down my cheeks. *Buddham Sharanam Gachchhami.*

## TATHATA MEANS SUCHNESS

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In my sannyas darshan, Osho assigned two groups for me to do in the couple of weeks that I would be in Poona before heading to the States. The first was Tathata which was somewhat modeled on the EST trainings. The second was a group with Amitabh called Tao.

The Tathata group was my first group experience. Until then I had never participated in groups so I really had no idea what to expect. Two experiences from the group have remained in my memory. The first memorable experience was one of the meditations we did, Osho's Mandala Meditation. The first stage of the meditation is running in place for 15 minutes. You begin rather slowly and gradually increase the speed and bring your knees up as high as possible. In the group this was accompanied by the group leaders pushing you on like a couple of drill sergeants, shouting "faster, faster" and "higher, higher." As you can easily imagine this brings up quite a bit of resistance. But the amazing thing was that there came a point when resistance just melted and the legs picked up speed and they were just running on their own. The contrast between the effort needed to fight the resistance and the resistance free running was stark.



*A scene from a group in Poona*

Another exercise in the Tathata group that was quite instructive was one where we were lying on the floor with blindfolds on and the group leaders came by and laid a large snake on my naked chest. If one wants to witness fear – that is the way to do it. And you are also able to see the result of fear. The snake would react to fear, but when you let the fear go, the snake was just a cold smooth moving object in your senses. It wasn't just the dropping of fear that was so instructional, but it was also the perceiving the fear as an object, a perception within my awareness but not my self, something separate from my self.

The Tao group didn't provide the same degree of insight. Although during one break I went out the front gate of the ashram and someone handed me a joint from which I took a couple of tokes before heading back into the group. It was an interesting mix – the energy of the group and a couple of tokes. At one point, I suggested we sit together in a circle holding hands and just feel the love, which we did. That was the only time I was ever stoned on some substance anywhere near Osho's presence.

When I arrived at the ashram, I had been outside of the States for three years, and very soon I realized the trip that I had been on up to that point had come to an end. Sannyas was truly the beginning of something new for me and I had no idea what that would entail, but I knew I had to return to the States and to Kansas City where I had left some friends with whom I would have to share what I had found.



## A DIVINE ABODE

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In my leaving darshan I told Osho I wanted to open a meditation center in Kansas City and he gave the name Devalayam. Devalayam means 'divine abode.' I bought a couple of series of discourses on cassette tape and several books and the center was on its way.

It was difficult at first returning to Kansas City. I was seeing friends I had passed through so much with and yet I felt myself to be in a very different place than when I had left three years earlier. Of course, there was a bit of the missionary in me who wanted to share as much as possible. I didn't find much interest in hearing about Osho, even from my good friend that had first heard about Meher Baba with me many years ago on the Country Club Plaza.

I remember very clearly saying to myself, "Okay Bhagwan, I give up, you take over." Very soon after giving up, I was sitting at some kind of spiritual gathering outdoors on grass in my orange clothes and mala when this guy sat down beside me. He was interested in whatever it was I was into. He was in a therapy group and had heard of Osho.

I found a house, or I should say a house found me, for a center. The house had some orange in it. I don't remember if it was in the wallpaper, paint, or carpet, but it spoke loud and clear this was the house for Devalayam. Soon afterwards this fellow I had met moved in. We were holding meditations both at a local church gym and at the house. A small group was forming. In the daytime I drove school buses with a Yogi Bhajan Sikh.

One night around midnight the doorbell rang. Mark had forgotten his key. I opened the door stark naked. He had brought an older woman home who was interested in listening to some discourses of Osho. They came in and I set her up with a few discourses and she stayed through the night until sunrise, listening. Her name was Joyce Schlossman. She was the ex-wife of a very successful car dealer in Kansas City, Schlossman Ford. Joyce was in the same group as Mark and wanted to be a therapist herself.

Soon after I got the house, I was on my way to visit another old friend and passed by the Nelson Adkins Museum of Art. I saw a Chinese girl teaching Tai Chi on the grass. When I passed by again on my return trip she was still there, so

I stopped and asked if she was taking students and she gave me the details of a new class that would be starting soon. Before long, Mark, myself, and another member of the Sikh community, who by the way had their center just two blocks up the street from Devalayam, were learning Tai Chi from Pearl. Pearl was nineteen at the time and a student at the Kansas City Art Institute. I had been smitten the first moment I saw her flow in Tai Chi.

Another therapist called to find out about the meditations. He had read *Only One Sky (Tantra: The Supreme Understanding)* and was very impressed. He had a practice down on the Plaza and was into the Baha'i movement. Soon there was a growing group which I tended to. I would go down to the Plaza once a week and have a raw vegetable lunch with Cliff the therapist and counsel him. Rather ironic really – me, this high school dropout twenty-six-year-old dressed in orange clothes counseling this white haired, highly respected psychologist during his lunch hour.

Mark took sannyas pretty early on and was making plans to go to Poona. Joyce soon became Ma Prem Kaveesha and I gave her a mala at Devalayam. Kaveesha had other friends that would come to the center and buy books and tapes and sometimes I would make house calls and deliver the goods. Kaveesha's best friend was Joyce Price. Coincidentally, Joyce was the mother of Donna Price who had visited me in Madagascar. Joyce did not, however, like Osho and in fact resented the fact he had somehow taken her best friend away.

Soon another young fellow started attending the meditations regularly, and before too long moved into the house when Mark (now Prakash) left for Poona. He also took sannyas and became Sanmarg. Sanmarg left for Poona just a short while before I left in the spring. I never saw him again, but years later I saw news of his father. He had been estranged from his father when he was living at the house. His father, John Testrake, was a TWA pilot and in 1985 was the pilot of Flight 847. There is a famous photo of him being held hostage by terrorists with a gun to his head on the tarmac at the Beirut airport.

I continued my Tai Chi lessons with Pearl for months and gave her a copy of one of Osho's books *No Water, No Moon*. She had it for months and never said a word about it, so finally I asked her if she was enjoying it, and she was. I had not talked to her about Osho in all that time. Finally, after months of my surrendering to her Tai Chi tutelage, I asked her out. Our first date was to a performance by

Marcel Marceau, which was interesting because she said she felt comfortable with me speaking very little. We enjoyed the time mostly in silence.

Kaveesha had gone off to Poona, and while there Osho had told her she would be his Tantra leader. When Kaveesha returned, she shared her energy and her presence with many others, and a few more of her people took sannyas.

Spring happened and Pearl and I were living together. Pearl took sannyas and was given the name Ma Prem Sagara\* (ocean of love). We made plans to go to India together. It would be an overland trip through Europe, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and into India.

Cliff, the psychologist, had decided to go to Poona to take sannyas. We hoped to meet up there but I had no idea when Sagara and I would actually arrive. Prakash had come back from Poona and would take over the center as well as my car.

So in a little less than nine months, and after letting go of my own ideas, a center was flourishing in the heartland.

\*Many years later Sagara would receive a new name, Sumati (wisdom).

## FROM CENTERING TO SATORI

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Sumati and I spent almost five months making the journey overland to Poona. It was not easy at times. We started off from England and combined hitchhiking with a few buses. For part of the journey, I drove a Mercedes-Benz car to Beirut where it was to be sold by the owner.

Sumati was only twenty and had not experienced that kind of overland traveling – it took its toll. I was so relieved when we finally arrived. I felt I had delivered my package to Osho. There were times, like once on the side of the road near Ankara, Turkey, when both of us wished we hadn't embarked on this journey together. But in the end, we made it, and soon we were in harmony again.

Osho gave me five groups to do this time: Centering, which was the usual first group; Enlightenment Intensive; Tantra; Zazen; and Awareness. Sumati was given a different schedule of groups.

A couple of insightful moments led up to a breakthrough. There was an exercise given in the Centering group which used a nonsensical phrase that had to be memorized in a particular pattern and which required very keen concentration to remember correctly while performing other unrelated activities. The phrase was something like, “Shatatti, shamaui. Shamaui, shamaui, shatatti. Shatatti, shamaui, shamaui, shatatti, shamaui, etc.” And once we memorized this phrase, we were paired up and sent into the busiest market area in Poona. Rickshaws, cars, bullock carts, cows, beggars, thousands of people all moving about, and we had to maneuver through this chaos all the while reciting our phrase. This exercise created a witnessing consciousness. You concentrated on the phrase so much that all the other actions, crossing the road, making your way through the throngs of people, happened almost as if in a dream. And because of your non-involvement, it flowed harmoniously. It really was quite remarkable.

Enlightenment Intensive was based on the format developed by Charles Berner, who combined interpersonal communication processes with the questioning “Who Am I” so that rather than internalizing the question, practitioners were paired up and asked each other to “tell me who you are.” This was a three-day group and, in the beginning, very superficial answers would assert themselves. I am a man. I am an American. I am a Leo. I am independent, selfish,

wonderful or any other adjective. As one persisted and exhausted all superficial responses, one was left with only an objectless inquiring. Of course, some people mistakenly made an objectification of this empty inquiring and thought, "I've got it."

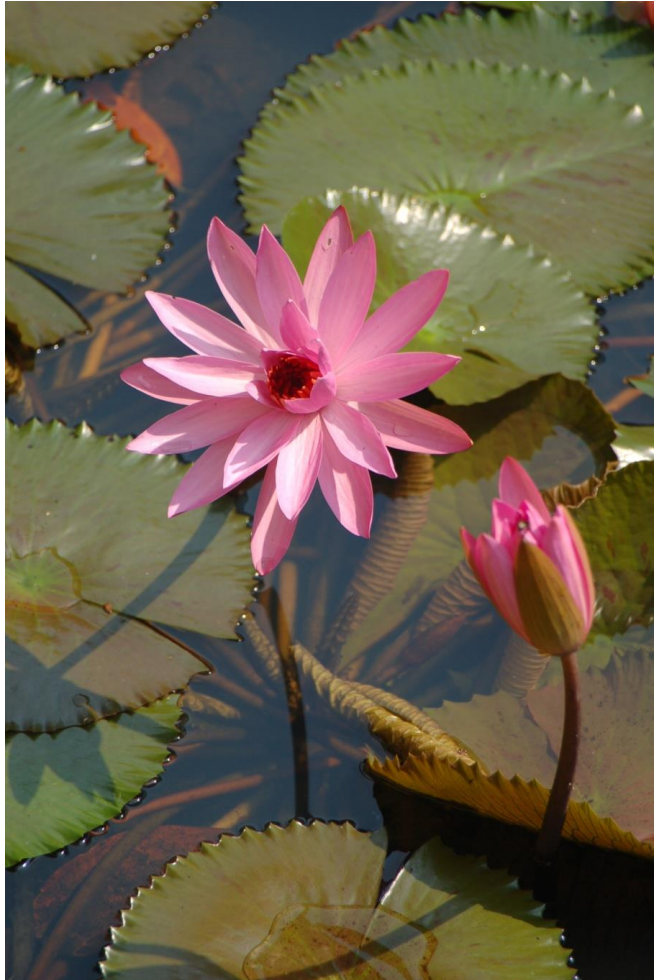
During the Tantra group I had the opportunity to face jealousy. During a break, I walked out and saw Sumati in a loving embrace with one of the guys Kaveesha had sent off to Poona from Kansas City. I could feel the energy of what one would call jealousy, but when I looked carefully, it was just energy. I had heard and read many times Osho talking about facing fear, jealousy, anger and not reacting but just observing. Here now, in front of my face, was an opportunity to do just that. And as he had said, I found that when one stayed with this energy without condemnation, it transformed, and lo and behold it had become love. And I felt the most love for the fellow; perhaps because of the opportunity he had given me to experience this transformation of emotion (energy).

At some point within the five days of the Zazen group, it became clear to me I would be going to Japan. It just suddenly dawned on me. The experience seemed to trigger some very deep feelings that needed to be freed. Besides the sitting and walking meditation, we experienced a Japanese tea ceremony performed by Asanga and a shakuhachi performance by Chaitanya Hari (Deuter). During the time I was in the Zazen group, Osho was speaking on Buddha's Heart Sutra.

While I was in Zazen, Sumati was doing the Leela group led by Somendra. My next group would also be led by Somendra, the first meeting of a new group called Awareness. After my Zazen and Sumati's Leela group had finished, we had a day or two together before I was to begin my last group. It was then I learned part of her "therapy" in Somendra's group was his bedding her. Somendra was known for his magical work with energy, a bit of an energy "wizard," and so apparently, he worked his sexual wizardry on Sumati.

Because of my knowledge of this, I went into the Awareness group with a presence of energy in my hara which I was very much aware of. This energy fueled my meditation within the group. I'm sure that Somendra had no idea I was the partner of his bedfellow nor probably would he have cared. I never said a word. I stayed with that energy and let it work its own magic in my belly.

Several days into the group, we were lying on the floor in a meditation and I was "being with" the exhalations of my breath. With each breath I went to its end and then let the inhalation happen on its own. On one of the exhalations as it finished, there was a movement that I would describe as the motion of a French press coffee maker pushing down the plunger, plunging my head down into my torso, then it stopped. At the time I felt like I was just on the verge of something but did not know what. At the end of the meditation, Somendra told the group I had had a mini satori.



The next day in one exercise we were moving around the room with blindfolds on, and I found myself drawn to the window. It felt as though my being was looking for a way out. Later we were again on the floor, and again I was staying with my exhalations, letting them come to a complete stop, waiting for the inhalation to happen on its own – and then – the French press. Only this time it completed its plunge, and it was as if everything that had been in my head, moved down into my torso below the shoulders. The head was gone. Just at the moment of this happening, the call of a bird was heard – but there was no space between the call and myself. It was as if, up to that point, there had always been a very

subtle screen through which the outside world had to pass; but not now. There was no separation. The meditation ended and Somendra had us sit up. We had had blindfolds on and when I pushed mine up, it looked like some kind of antennae on top of my head. Somendra made a remark and everyone laughed. But when everyone laughed, I laughed, and there was no sense of a person who was being laughed at. There was no person there.

He must have motioned for me to speak because I heard myself say, “The goose is out.” I went on to tell him that yesterday when he had said a satori had happened, he was wrong. It hadn’t quite fully come to fruition, but today it had.

Note: Following is a question from a discourse in which Osho talks about satori.

*Beloved Osho,*

*Over the years, I have heard various sannyasins saying that they experienced a satori. What exactly is a satori, and how does it come about?*

*Satori is a glimpse of the ultimate . . . as if you are seeing the Himalayan peaks. But you are far away, you are not on the peaks, and you have not become the peaks. It is a beautiful experience, very enchanting, exciting, challenging. Perhaps it may lead you towards samadhi. Satori is a glimpse of samadhi.*

*Samadhi is the fulfillment of satori. What was a glimpse has become now an eternal reality to you. Satori is like opening a window – a little breeze comes in, a little light. You can see a little sky, but it is framed. Your window becomes a frame to the sky, which has no frame. And if you always live in the room and you have never been out of it, the natural conclusion will be that the sky is framed.*

*It is only in this decade that a few modern painters have started painting without frames. It was a shock to all art lovers who could not conceive it: what is the meaning of a painting without a frame?*

*But these modern painters said, “In existence nothing is framed, so to make a beautiful, natural scenery with a frame is a lie. The frame is the lie – it is added by you. It is not there outside, so we have dropped the frames.”*

*Satori is just a glimpse, from the window, of the beautiful sky full of stars. If it can invite you to come out to see the unframed vastness of the whole sky full of millions of stars, it is samadhi.*

*The word samadhi is very beautiful. Sam means equilibrium; adhi, the other part of samadhi, means all the tensions, all the turmoil, all disturbances have disappeared. There is only a silent equilibrium . . . as if time has stopped, all movement has frozen. Even to feel it for a single moment is enough: you cannot lose it again.*

*Satori can be lost because it was only a glimpse. Samadhi cannot be lost because it is a realization. Satori is on the way to samadhi, but it can become either a help or a hindrance – a help if you understand this is just the beginning of something far greater, a hindrance if you think you have come to the end.*

*In meditation, first you will come to satori – just here and there glimpses of light, blissfulness, ecstasy. They come and go. But remember, howsoever beautiful, because they come and go, you have not yet come home – where you come and never go again.*

-Osho

From ***The Path of the Mystic***, Discourse #37

That was the last group that was assigned and the last group I did. Within a short time Sumati and I made preparations to go to Japan. We had bought the very first tickets for the train to Gujarat, going to the new commune, and because it was delayed, we decided to go to Japan and make some money teaching English. We got a refund on our tickets for the train and bought some tape discourses to take with us. My friend Peter, who I had traveled with from Kenya to Madagascar, was living in Tokyo, and so that would be a good place to land.



## ARIGATO NIPPON

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Sumati and I arrived in Tokyo in December having come from India by way of Thailand and the Philippines. The cold was a shock to the system. Not long after arriving, I came down with pneumonia. We were staying in my friend Peter's apartment, and as is customary in Japan, there was no heat. However, we did use to snuggle up to the *kotatsu* (table heater) during dinner. After dinner it was time for a jump into the very hot Japanese bath, out into the unheated room, and under the futon covers on the floor. All of these things, combined with a probably depleted immune system from traveling and living in India for several months, created an opportunity for the pneumonia to set in.

Peter was working and so had a state medical card which provided very inexpensive medical care. Because we were both blonde haired *gaijins* we thought that I could just use his picture ID. It worked. The only problem was I never found a doctor who could speak English, and I did not speak Japanese. The breathing problems became so severe I had to sleep partially sitting up.

I knew that Peter's girlfriend was not happy we were staying. We felt it would be best if we found somewhere else. We met a Japanese sannyasin named Adinatha who offered us a room in his apartment. Very soon after leaving Peter's, I started getting better, but what finally healed me was acupuncture. Adinatha knew a



sannyasin acupuncturist and suggested that I go see him. I really don't like needles, which probably saved me from more serious drugs. So, the thought of someone sticking numerous needles into my skin did not appeal. But I saw him, had a session, and still I could not say that I enjoyed it, but rather endured it. Very soon after having the session I was healed.

One day Peter called us to tell us he knew of a Japanese house that was being offered by a Japanese reporter who for some reason preferred to rent to foreigners. It was being offered for a very reasonable rent, fully furnished with everything we would need. It was also located closer in to the city on the Marunouchi subway line which was very convenient.

Sumati had started working for the same company where Peter worked, proof reading advertisements in English and instruction manuals for Japanese companies, such as Nikon, Panasonic, etc. Teaching jobs were coming my way and I was getting a full schedule. I had one job I traveled three hours each way for and taught for two. But the pay made it worthwhile.

The combination of a long-haired sannyasin dressed in orange and wearing a mala proved the perfect antidote for the serious Japanese mentality. These were very serious students, and I found the most important aid to their learning English, was creating an atmosphere in which they felt comfortable being a little crazy. They knew that it was okay to make mistakes and have fun in my classes.

When I was in Nepal, before going to Poona, I had met a Japanese couple at our guest house. Later on, I would run into them again in the Ashram. They both took sannyas around the same time as I did. Her name became Geeta and his name was Asanga. I remember seeing Asanga during some of the meditations, and he seemed to be one of the most focused people I had ever met. In my Zazen group on my second stay in Poona, Asanga was the one who performed the tea ceremony.

The rumor had been going around the sannyas community in Japan that Asanga had become enlightened while in Poona. He was returning to Japan soon. One night, Satchidanda, another sannyasin living and working in Tokyo, invited a few people over including Asanga. That night, I recognized something had changed with Asanga. It was as if his being occupied the entire room, whereas previously

he was the most contained person I had ever met. In that small apartment room, he was a wide presence.

Asanga was Chinese Japanese from Chinese parents and lived in Yokohama. Sumati and I visited him one day and had lunch at a Chinese restaurant. I visited Asanga once more before leaving Japan. This time it was with my travel buddy Narayanadeva, who by this time had come to Japan. He was taking over our house and some of my teaching jobs as Sumati and I returned to Poona. By this time Asanga had opened some kind of a night spot in Yokohama called, if I remember correctly, Samadhi. The three of us just spent time sitting together in silence.

## THE SECOND ZEN STICK

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My first Zen stick happened when I was around three years old. It is one of the earliest memories I have. Of course, I had never heard the term and it would be another twenty-three years or so until I would.

I was sleeping in my bed in a room with no one else present. Suddenly, how could it be otherwise, I felt a whack on the top part of the back of my head. I sat up and looked around the room. There wasn't anyone there.



*Deeksha in Vrindavan*

Twenty-five years later, I met a ferocious Zen master who carried a Zen stick made out of her words. Her name was Deeksha. Deeksha was the boss, the mom, the coordinator of the Vrindavan kitchen in the ashram.

Sumati and I arrived from Japan with our pockets full of money saved from working and wanted to make a contribution to the ashram. Sheela gladly accepted but suggested we keep some for our own expenses and then assigned both of us to work in Vrindavan. Deeksha was not only in charge of the public ashram restaurant but also had her own band of handymen for whatever projects came

up. It was almost as though she had her own empire within the ashram; this certainly was no secret from Osho. Sumati went into the kitchen and I became a handyman.

Deeksha was known for her passion, energy, and insults as well as being extremely capable of organizing work. She was also one of the most generous people in the ashram, often using her personal money to come to the aid of her friends and workers. But no one wanted to be called on the carpet by Deeksha. One day you could be leading a crew of carpenters working on building bookshelves for Osho's library; the next day you could be banished to the offsite bakery away from the ashram.

On one particular day during the lecture, deep meditation had descended. It was one of those discourses where Osho would take you by the hand and lead you ever deeper into your interiority. With this sense of being came a peace that knew no fear. I lingered longer than usual after the discourse bathing in the majesty.



When I left Buddha Hall, someone had been summoned to find Purushottama and bring him to Deeksha. I knew what awaited me but there was a calm, easy feeling that accompanied my walk. I remember that she was standing with her back

to the kitchen wall and she let fly all of her arrows. She was extremely animated and I have no idea what she said, but what I remember is this: it was as if love was pouring from her in what would look like anger to an onlooker. The energy that issued forth just washed over and through and yet didn't touch me. I was a witness to a raging Zen master but inside was the same peace that I had left Buddha Hall with. From that moment, I knew it was possible to be in the marketplace but not of the marketplace. I remained untouched.

Years after we had left Poona and even after the Ranch had closed, I would think about Deeksha and feel some regret that she had not had a Deeksha like I had. Deeksha offered me an opportunity that no one else in the ashram could. It is easy to see why Osho gave her so much freedom and so much responsibility. In his Buddhafield, even the wildest, fiercest expressions were love.

## MY BELOVED BODHISATTVAS

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On June 21, 1979, nearly nine months after arriving from Japan and beginning work full time in the Ashram, Vidya stopped Sumati and me as we entered Buddha Hall. She told us to come see her after discourse.



Osho began discourse on this day with the words:

*My beloved bodhisattvas . . . Yes, that's how I look at you. That's how you have to start looking at yourselves. Bodhisattva means a buddha in essence, a buddha in seed, a buddha asleep, but with all the potential to be awake. In that sense everybody is a bodhisattva, but not everybody can be called a bodhisattva – only those who have started groping for the light, who have started longing for the dawn, in whose hearts the seed is no longer a seed but has become a sprout, has started growing.*

*You are bodhisattvas because of your longing to be conscious, to be alert, because of your quest for the truth. The truth is not far away, but there are very few fortunate ones in the world who*

*long for it. It is not far away but it is arduous, it is hard to achieve. It is hard to achieve, not because of its nature, but because of our investment in lies.*

*We have invested for lives and lives in lies. Our investment is so much that the very idea of truth makes us frightened. We want to avoid it; we want to escape from the truth. Lies are beautiful escapes – convenient, comfortable dreams.*

*But dreams are dreams. They can enchant you for the moment; they can enslave you for the moment, but only for the moment. And each dream is followed by tremendous frustration, and each desire is followed by deep failure.*

*But we go on rushing into new lies; if old lies are known, we immediately invent new lies. Remember that only lies can be invented; truth cannot be invented. Truth already is! Truth has to be discovered, not invented. Lies cannot be discovered, they have to be invented.*

*Mind feels very good with lies because the mind becomes the inventor, the doer. And as the mind becomes the doer, ego is created. With truth, you have nothing to do . . . and because you have nothing to do, mind ceases, and with the mind the ego disappears, evaporates. That's the risk, the ultimate risk.*

*You have moved towards that risk. You have taken a few steps – staggering, stumbling, groping, haltingly, with many doubts, but still you have taken a few steps; hence I call you bodhisattvas.*

-Osho

From ***The Dhammapada, Vol.1***, Discourse #1

After discourse, Vidya told us that we were moving into the Ashram. Up to that point, we had been responsible for our own housing. We had food passes which meant that the Ashram provided our meals but we took care of our rent (mind you in India rent is not much). But we were very happy to be moving into the Ashram. We were moving into a new bamboo structure that had been built at number 70 Koregaon Park. This was a very large house two blocks from the Ashram proper, which the Ashram had acquired and in which different facilities as well as living quarters were being housed.

By this time, I was working at the bakery and given the responsibility of being one of the drivers for the bakery. This job entailed driving a large Mercedes-Benz van with left-side steering through the streets of Poona, in a right-side steering world. I also delivered fresh, hot croissants stacked on metal trays in an Ashram



rickshaw. The croissants had to arrive before discourse ended because it would be very difficult to deliver them with everyone filing out into Vrindavan. Of course, you never knew when Osho would complete his discourse. It could be one hour or two hours in length, though generally they were around ninety minutes long.

Arriving during discourse would require turning off the engine, pushing the rickshaw through the front gate and down the drive to the kitchen, taking great



care not to upset the stacked metal trays, all the while being as quiet as possible. With all the possibilities for mishaps, it is amazing to think the worst that happened was occasionally misjudging the ending, and having to navigate through swarms of blissed out sannyasins.

## QUESTIONS?

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During the entire three to four years I spent in Poona, I never submitted a question to Osho for discourse. It just didn't happen. But once I felt compelled to ask something during darshan. Darshan was an intimate gathering of sannyasins and visitors that took place in the evenings. Many sannyasins asked about personal problems, very often concerning relationship issues.

When Sumati and I arrived back from Japan, I thought I SHOULD ask a question so I formulated a flippant one about how difficult relationship was. To be honest, it was not really my question, but I felt like I was missing out on time in front of Osho addressing sannyasins' burning issues. I remember even when I asked, I felt like a phony. It just wasn't a real question for me. Osho never responded. He just ignored the question.

If one had ashram life or work-related questions, they could be submitted through the office. You would get an answer in a couple of days. There are those who believe that some letters were never answered by him but by one of his



*Samurai guards at karate practice*

secretaries. For me, it does not matter because for the two questions I submitted during my time in the ashram, the answers were right.

At some point during my working life with Deeksha, I wanted a change. No doubt, it was during some period I wasn't enjoying very much. During my first stay in Poona, I had volunteered and helped out with packing books. Gatha was in charge and we had developed a nice connection. And now two years later, Gatha was still in charge of the book packing, so I wrote a letter to Osho and asked if I could work with the books. The answer I received was yes, but first I had to pass through the fire. And of course, working in Vrindavan was that fire.

The next request involved some kind of historical fantasy. In the beginning, the Ashram security was taken care of by the Krishna guards. They were called this because the sannyasin responsible for this team was named Krishna. They would be the ones posted at Lao Tzu gate and the entrances to the Ashram. But at some point, a new group was formed and they were called Samurais. This group was led by Shiva. They had great Samurai uniforms and it was difficult not to be envious of their position. My interest in the samurais lay more with the Japanese Samurai tradition. Samurais were honorable, spiritual warriors and somehow that struck a chord inside. I wrote to Osho and asked if I could be a Samurai. The answer I got back was that I was already a samurai. A couple of years later, at the Ranch in Oregon, I would find I was both working with the books and in the Peace Force, at the same time.

## SETTING THE TIME IN THE TIMELESS

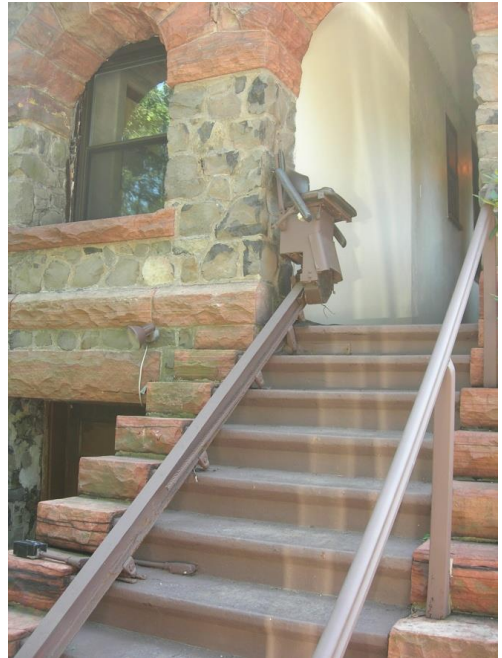
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In the spring of 1981, Deeksha took a group of her workers and a few others to New Jersey to prepare a large house, which had been known as Kip's Castle, for the arrival of Osho a month later. The Castle was a 9,000 square foot, 30-room mansion, complete with turrets and a small chapel. There was a lot to do within a very short period of time. The main house and carriage house had to be completely remodeled. The castle was in Montclair sitting on the first ridge of the Watchung Mountains with an incredible view of New York City. You could even see the Statue of Liberty on a clear day. Our nearest neighbors were Salvatorian Fathers, who lived in a monastery next door.

Osho arrived on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Because of his bad back, we had installed an electric chair to take him up the entrance stairs at the side of the house. Inside was an elevator. He took one long look at the chair and walked up the stairs; he never used it.

The atmosphere of living and working at the Castle was so very different from Poona. Because of the small numbers compared to the throngs in Poona, Osho was free to walk around the grounds and check out our work. I remember one day running very quickly around the back of the house and almost running into him. I came to a skidding stop.

Soon after his arrival, he started having driving lessons so he could get his driver's license. He would occasionally pick someone from the group (that would gather to see him off) to accompany him on the drive. Most everyone that rode with him was scared to death. Of course, Osho was a fearless driver and that is what terrified the passengers. Before too long, the musicians



began to gather for his departure and arrival which soon blossomed into mini celebrations. He would often give some small gift to someone who he had picked out for that day. He once gave me a rather nice pen, which would later be used to write book orders. Our work schedule was not so demanding by this time because we had already completed work on his living quarters.

When he first arrived, he shared a floor of the house with a tenant who had a lease from before the purchase. I forget the fellow's name, but he had a big dog. Occasionally, Osho and he would meet in the elevator.

One day I was downstairs in the main office when Vivek came in. She said that she needed help programming the VCR that had just been purchased. I looked around and as there was no one else present said that I would be happy to help.

I followed her upstairs into a room that had been outfitted for Osho to watch videos. He was sitting in his comfortable chair beaming as we entered. On the floor was the new VCR with its time flashing at 12:00.



*Kip's Castle, Montclair, New Jersey*

Setting the clocks on these machines required pushing the correct button until the clock moved around to the correct time. And on this VCR, as on most, there was one button for fast changing of the time and one for slow.

I sat on the floor and explained how to do it, while setting the time. The difficulty was that as I was focusing on the time (so that I did not go past the needed setting) a tremendous expansiveness was taking place. It took a lot of awareness to remain grounded in time and simultaneously be dissolving into the timeless. And of course, Osho would ask a question here and there to make it even more interesting.

I think I missed the mark the first time and passed the correct time, but I was sure not to do so on the second go round.

## MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

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*Rancho Rajneesh, Rajneeshpuram, Oregon*

Sumati and I finally arrived at the Ranch in Oregon in either late November or early December. We had started out from New Jersey on September 1<sup>st</sup> and crisscrossed the U.S. as well as driven into Canada.

All along the way, we stopped in bookstores and visited distributors taking orders for Osho's books. The response was very, very good. Of course, all the publicity surrounding his coming to the States did not hurt. Neither did the ads that Chidvilas had placed in *Time* magazine with his quotes. People were very curious and going into their bookshops wanting to find out more.

It was also a tremendous learning opportunity finding out exactly how the book business worked, and what the bookshops and distributors wanted from us in

order to aid them in the sale of the books. Many strong connections were forged that lasted for years.

Every couple of days, we would call Vidya and check in. Occasionally, she would relay something Osho had said concerning the selling of the books.

When we did finally arrive, I had a bit of a debriefing session with Pratima, who was in charge of book publishing. We had gathered a considerable amount of constructive feedback that we could use to chart our course with publishing.

After a couple of days, we were invited to Lao Tzu House to see Osho. This was the first time I had had such an intimate (Osho, Sumati, myself, and I think, Sheela) meeting with him, except for when I had programmed the VCR at the Castle. He gave both Sumati and me gifts; mine was a leather cowboy hat. I don't remember what she received but it might have been the same.

Then it was down to business and he asked when we would be going out again. This was rather ironic. In Poona, when anyone arrived back from the West, the first thing he would ask was, "How long will you be staying?" In this case, it was, "When will you be leaving?"

I explained that now was not a good time to be out selling books because the stores had already made their orders for the holiday season. It would be best to wait until at least mid-January. He nodded and that was the end of the discussion.

Many times later, I would look back on that situation. If I hadn't been so involved in the book distribution, and so very interested in doing it right, I might have answered Osho's questioning with more of a desire to say what I thought he would have wanted to hear. But as it turned out, I was not tuned into that at all. I simply told him how I saw the situation and he understood. I give this as an example not of how I was above wanting to please, I'm sure I can come up with many examples of that, but rather of what happened if one did not.

This was one of the lessons that so many of us learned at the Ranch – we had so many opportunities. On the one hand, everyone wanted to stay close to the master so they would do whatever was necessary to make that happen. But the reality is to be true to yourself (and by yourself I do not mean the whims of your mind or the pitfalls of the ego, but that silent inner voice) is the way to be close to the master.



Another of these situations involved Sheela. Rama was the coordinator of Buddhagosha (the book distribution department). Because I was the one most involved with the bookstores, I would often suggest things that we should do to support the stores. One time, (I think it involved a catalog or other marketing material) I had made a suggestion to Rama, but he was concerned with how Sheela would react. He hesitated to pass it on. For one coordinators meeting with Sheela, Rama was ill and so I had to stand in for him. During the meeting, I made the proposal to Sheela and she accepted without hesitation.

It is important for us who were at the Ranch to look to what our own experience was. What do we know from our own experience? After the Ranch, it became increasingly apparent that we had not all had the same experience. We have different conditionings, resistances, proclivities, needs and desires, and because of that, found ourselves in differing circumstances.

This is not just a lesson concerning the Ranch but this applies to life. It illustrates how the commune was a large laboratory, a stage for learning about ourselves, and the inner obstacles that prevent us from living a life of love and understanding. The commune provided opportunities for lifetimes of growth in both.



*I'm the one with the short beard*

When I was not working with the books, I was a Peace Force (police) officer. This mostly involved driving around the Ranch and dropping in for tea at different locations. This provided another opportunity to bring the bliss down into the real world. As

you can see from the photo above, Osho did not make it easy on those who were

charged with keeping his body from being mobbed. You can also see that he enjoyed the whole affair.

Sometimes our duties became more serious. During the last festival (1985), while on patrol, we were called to an emergency at Krishnamurti Lake. There had been a swimming accident, apparently someone had drowned. When we finally got the body out of the lake, to my surprise, I found it was Adinatha. He was the Japanese sannyasin Sumati and I had stayed with for some time in Tokyo. The investigation showed it may not have been accidental. He might have just allowed himself to sink into the timelessness of the lake and never resurface.



*Krishnamurti Lake*

## LIFE IS A MYSTERIUM

---

At the end of the ranch, we moved Rajneesh Publications to Boulder, Colorado. I had traveled through Boulder many times with the books and knew there was a very diverse group of spiritual misfits assembled in Boulder. I felt we would fit right in.

Soon several semi-trucks of books were loaded and sent to Boulder. We assembled a crew and were on our way out into the world. It was not an easy transition because we had been operating as a non-profit and now had to make enough income to survive. Additionally, we were still expected to fill some of the functions of the non-profit.

There were conflicts with the international management team. Shakyamuni, who had been doing our sales trips on the east coast, and I decided to create our own marketing company and support the sales from one step removed. I was coming to the end of my book career: I could feel it; *the juice was out*; but I didn't acknowledge it right away. Something was shifting internally also; I was being increasingly drawn into *individual* inquiry. We managed to transform the knowledge gained from calling on new age bookstores into a unique music and art store named Mysterium. This store would also be able to support the newly born music distribution business that had just started to show its shoots. Soon that business too would break off and flourish as White Swan Records and Distributors.

Looking back, it is easy to see it was the conflict, the friction with management that helped fuel the inner fire which gave birth to new endeavors. If one is grateful for the result then one also has to be grateful for the means. Life is a *Mysterium Tremendum*.



## BE A LIGHT UNTO OURSELVES

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Why did Osho change the traditional order used for the Three Jewels? At first, I wondered if it was just a mistake that Sheela had made when introducing them to us, but later I found discourses in which Osho referred to them in the order that was presented to us.

*Buddham Sharanam Gachchhami – I take refuge in the Awakened One*

*Sangham Sharanam Gachchhami – I take refuge in the Community of the Awakened One*

*Dhammam Sharanam Gachchhami – I take refuge in the Ultimate Teaching of the Awakened One*

Traditionally they are said with Dhammam preceding Sangham. Each of us will have our own insight as to why he changed them, but regardless of why, this is the order his work has operated on me.

First it was I bow down to the Buddha, to the Master. This is the easiest. Who cannot **but** bow down to the Master once the Master is met? For me this is what took place in what we refer to as Poona One. It was all Him. He gave us meditations. He gave us daily discourses. He guided us through our personal issues during darshan. He then began working on us in energy darshans and finally introduced us to Satsang.

Sangham Sharanam Gachchhami was more difficult and for some almost impossible. To surrender to the commune is much more arduous because often it means saying yes to stupidity. But it is that saying yes to stupidity that is intelligence because one understands that it is transformative. It is surrender. Surrender means putting aside the conditioning and saying yes. This then lessens the grip that the conditioning has on oneself. In fact, it lessens the grip of oneself. One can let go of conditioning only with awareness. One does not say yes because of a need for appreciation, a hunger for position or power, but in the understanding that it is here the transformation takes hold. It is here awareness is strengthened and the ego begins to lose its grip.

When I saw Osho take off in the plane from the runway at Rajneeshpuram, I knew at that moment I would never see him again. This was the beginning of

Dhamma, the ultimate truth of the Awakened One. What does it mean to surrender to the ultimate truth? It is when one starts *being* the teaching. One starts living the understanding in one's own light.

The beginning of living the understanding didn't immediately start at that moment of watching the plane take off; it took a little time. I was still involved with the distribution of Osho's books. We had to move the books to Colorado and set up distribution anew. And then because of conflict with the organization, I moved further and further away, until finally I was standing on my own. The call of the inner guru was heard.

For the first time the spark of inquiry was lit. Up to that point, I had meditated but it was witnessing phenomena: sensations, thoughts, or feelings. Now, the consciousness was seeking its source. This is what I believe to be conversion. It is here that surrender to Dhamma begins. To me this means Self-Inquiry. It is the movement from *seeking* to *inquiring*. It is the movement from the outer guru to the inner guru. Up to this point, one is living on borrowed bliss. From this point on, one is relying on one's own light of understanding that has been lit by Buddha, strengthened by Sangha, and is now being stabilized in Dhamma.

This does not mean that one is no longer open to the understanding being expressed through the Masters; on the contrary one is more open than ever. And once the contact with the inner guru is established, there is no fear whether some teaching is valid or not, because it is seen from one's own understanding. There is clarity. The understanding is experienced for oneself; it is acted upon. Even more accurately, it can be said that the understanding itself, the seeing itself, is the acting, is the transformation. It is in the fire of this Being Understanding that the "me" is consumed, impression by impression, "Gathe gathe para gathe parasam gathe. Bodhi svaha!" (Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond. O what an awakening all-hail!)

Everyone passes through the Three Jewels at their own pace. What is important is that we don't linger too long on the way and that we continue, until finally, we are living the Dhamma, being a light unto oneself.

**Postscript** – It occurs to me that there are many who reading "Be a light unto ourselves" will think that it is ironic for those of us who have lived with a master,

who have lived as part of a commune, to place importance on being a light unto ourselves.

To those, I would say that is precisely what drew us to the flame. We had become aware that until we were capable of separating ourselves from this conditioning, we would not be that light. We had already discovered that our minds were filled with conditioning – by our parents, the society, the churches, the politicians, and the schools.

We could also see that anyone who has not managed to extricate themselves from that conditioning is simply incapable of being their own light because it is through that conditioning, that mind, which one sees the world, acts and reacts. Is it any wonder that we live in a world in conflict? And we found that meditation is the means of *brain washing* (de-conditioning). Meditation is not a learning, rather an unlearning, which in the end uncovers the original face.



*Bodhgaya, India*

## Buddha's Farewell Message to Ananda

*Be ye lamps unto yourselves,  
be a refuge to yourselves.*

*Hold fast to Truth as a lamp;  
hold fast to the Truth as a refuge.*

*Look not for a refuge in anyone beside yourselves.*

*And those, who shall be a lamp unto themselves,  
shall betake themselves to no external refuge,  
but holding fast to the Truth as their lamp,  
and holding fast to the Truth as their refuge,  
they shall reach the topmost height.*



## TIME TO BE

---

Touched by majesty  
Bathed in glorious mystery  
Surely shaken, perhaps awakened  
Worked, played, meditated, celebrated  
We knew it was time in magic.

When the moment passed  
Some put away the treasure  
Knowing that when the time was right  
We'd bring it forth and let it shine.

So, we burrowed, and integrated  
Hibernated and some emigrated  
There were those who propagated  
Even a few were castigated  
Still the treasure we knew  
Lived in us – our Life.

Been hiding in the dark lying in wait  
Searching for the time of Now.  
As time came, always knew it would,  
To shine, to share, to be aware.

Need not wait no more  
For surely Now – is the time to  
Be  
Unto Ourselves – the Light.

In 2006, Amido and I returned to India for the first time since leaving in 1981. Following, you will find accounts of meeting with some remarkable folks interspersed with my own essays, poems, stories, and insights that have occurred to me along the way. This second collection was originally titled *Here to Now and Behind*. I have added content and decided to combine it into *From Lemurs to Lamas* to make one book.

Sometimes the voice is strong because I am not always listening. Sometimes the voice is soft because it is soothing my cuts and bruises, and sometimes the voice is silent because once in a while, I am present.

You should approach these outpourings not as the one being spoken to but rather as if you are overhearing a conversation at a coffee shop.

I am eternally grateful to be able to witness my own un-enlightenment. It has been and will continue to be the fuel for its demise, Here to Now and Behind.

## SATSANG INVOCATION

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May our inner flame illuminate the way  
from darkness to light,  
from unconsciousness to consciousness,  
from becoming to being.  
And from the outer body to the inner body to no body,  
from the many to the one and beyond.  
Om shanti, shanti, shanti.

*Ending of the search is the beginning of inquiry. Searching is stepping out – inquiring is retracing our steps.*

## INSPECTION REQUIRED

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From where come you  
My thoughts  
You're not, you are  
Again you're not

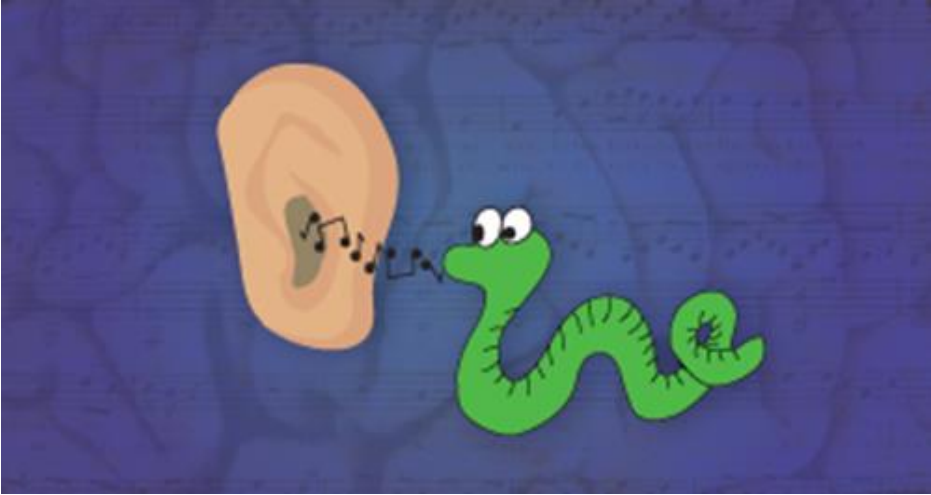
You lead me to your sons and daughters  
I have known your ancestors  
But on careful inspection  
You disappear into silence

Come back and make a stand  
But no, you fold  
Like a nomad's tent  
A shadow hiding

# EARWORMS AND MEDITATION

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A few years ago, sitting and chatting together after a Satsang Meditation, one of the guests brought up the subject of earworms. I suggested that the earworms



were asking for attention in order to be released. I find that often we say something with much truth in it but don't really listen to it ourselves. This time I did listen to what had been said and began to consciously explore this earworm phenomenon. You know earworms, we've all experienced them; usually fragments of a song that just keep repeating themselves in the mind, and they become really pesky because they won't leave us alone.

So, I decided to pay more attention when one next appeared and found that if I gave it full attention without either singing along or rejecting, it very quickly evaporated. It seemed as if a piece of consciousness had gotten unconsciously attached to a bit of music. And that the only way to release it was to make that piece of unconscious consciousness conscious. It works, at least for me, and it works every time. If it doesn't, it is telling me that I have not given full attention and when I do, poof! It is important to note here that we are not to do anything with the earworm itself. It is the unconsciousness that we are dealing with.

I suspect you have already guessed where this is going and yes, you are right. This is the whole story of watching the mind, exactly the same. We let the comings

and goings of the mind appear without either singing along or rejecting them. We make the unconscious consciousness, tangled up in the impressions of the mind, conscious. And again, we are not to do anything with the thoughts themselves; it is our own unconsciousness that we are transforming. And the transformation happens by itself; as J. Krishnamurti said, “Seeing IS transformation.”

*In Meditation we are all beginners because we always start from the beginning. And the more we remain in Awareness the more we remain at the beginning.*



## ONE STEP BACK

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When I was a kid visiting my grandparents in the summer, I used to sit out on the porch and watch the constant flow of cars passing. Sometimes, I would check out the license plates to see which state they were from. When you focus on each car as it passes, you catch the car in your attention, and follow it until you turn your head to catch the next. But if you have no particular interest in where the cars are from, you can just stay stationary, and watch the flow as a whole. In this way you are not moving the head to follow each individually. It is the same with watching our thoughts. If we have some interest in the individual thoughts, we follow them for a while, and then snap back to catch the next. But if we are not involved with each passing thought, we can witness the movement of the mind as a whole. This way of watching is just one step back.



*Sati handprints, Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India*

*It is clear that it is impossible to be in the NOW without moving into no-mind. It is the mind which prevents the NOW by endlessly moving between the past and the future. Once outside the prison of the mind, we are naturally in the moment of NOW.*

## MEDITATION: THE MEANS AND THE END

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It is important to remember that meditation is not what we think. It is not what we visualize. It is not even what we do. It is our original nature, pure awareness.

It is, however, the Means and the End to reclaiming that original nature.

It is the end because real meditation is awareness, our own pure consciousness. We have forgotten our own nature because this consciousness has gotten lost in the world of name and form. It has become identified with the body-mind, and because of this identification, the body-mind has become the master. The mind is a wonderful servant but a terrible master.

Meditation is the means to right this wrong relationship – to reestablish awareness, consciousness, as the master. It is through the witnessing consciousness that transformation is possible. It is through the awakening of intelligence that meditation brings the transformation. This intelligence is not of the mind. It is from beyond the mind. It is the light behind the mind. Once consciousness reclaims its rightful place as the master, then everything is naturally set right.

*We honor the one to which everything appears and remember it is that, which we are, as I am.*

*It is not enough to know what needs to happen, that is the emptying of consciousness through witnessing, through meditation. But one also needs to create the space, the opportunity for that to take place.*

# I AM MEDITATION

---

I begin with the realization that I Am. I may not be sure what I Am but I know that I Am. I cannot deny that, even to deny that, I need to be. I am first person singular.

I begin with the feeling I Am. Staying with this sensing, I can see that everything I think I am begins with this I Am. In order to think thoughts and have ideas about myself, I need a being, an I Am.

Now, meditating on this I Am, all projections cease. I allow all that I think I Am to return to this root. I see that I Am Not This nor That but simply I Am. I Am at the root of being. I Bathe in this Beingness. I Rejoice in this Divine Beingness. I Melt in this Love of Being.

This Beingness is the True Guru, the real teacher. I surrender to the feet of this Beingness. I trust this I Am, and when thoughts reappear, I remember being is prior to thought. I am not my thoughts.

I am Awareness.

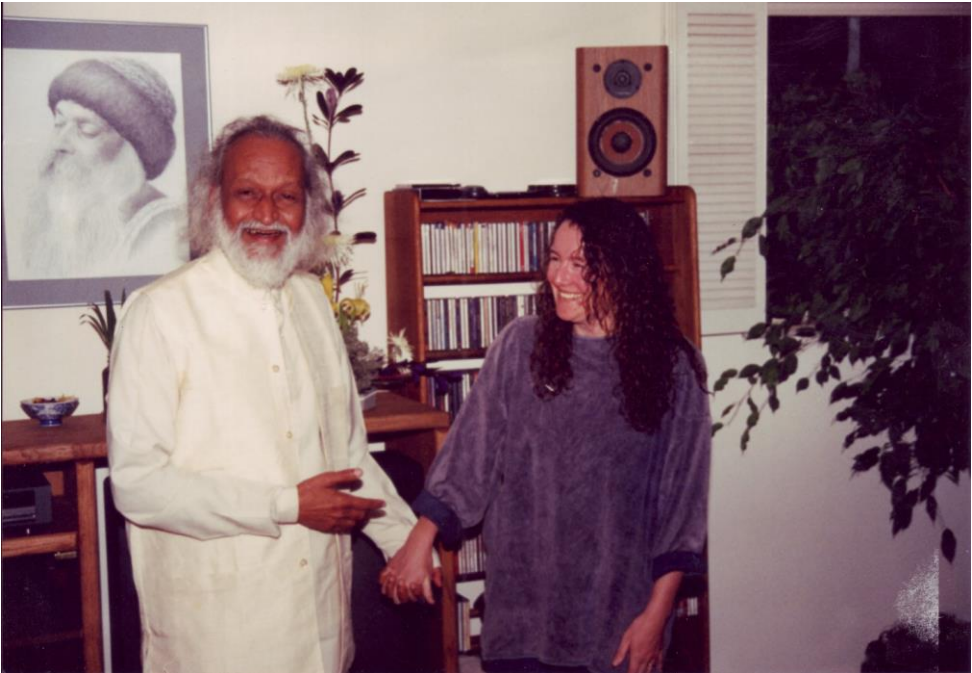
## A VISITOR FROM BEYOND THE MIND

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Sometime in the early 90's, my friend Santap moved to Boulder, Colorado, and after settling in, made arrangements to bring Dada Gavand, a teacher that he had spent some time with in California, to town. He was sponsoring the visit and Dada would be staying with Santap in his mountain home. Dada's visit coincided with my own inward turn and interest in self-inquiry as a spiritual practice. I read his books and very much appreciated his keen insight. They were prodding me in.

Santap needed some help with the organizing and I was happy to assist. Dada primarily taught through one-on-one interviews but he did do a few public talks. Santap spread the word of Dada's upcoming visit and organized a list of interested people for the interviews. Together we set up a public talk.

Dada did not enjoy the cold. He arrived from somewhere warm but was going to be staying in the Rockies at about 9,000, feet in the fall. Amido and I offered to host Dada down in town if he wanted, but he liked to stay with people he knew.



*Dada with Amido while staying with us in Boulder, Colorado*



Amido and I had an interview together, and this meeting with Dada was very helpful for me. Up to that point, I was still thinking of “going inside” as a journey, as a movement through some imaginary inner space. I don’t remember the exact words that were said but there was a shift, and I understood for the first time that “going inside means not going at all.” This was a major insight. Dada recognized that a shift had happened and later suggested to Santap that he would like to spend half of his time in Boulder with us.

It was a complete joy to be with him in the house even at the requested ninety-degree temperature. One thing I found interesting was that we would be sitting and chatting around the dinner table and suddenly some kind of shift would happen. The atmosphere would change and there would be a palpable silence. It was almost as if a presence had descended, or the entire room had been lifted to a higher dimension, and he would then speak as the spiritual teacher. Even his speaking mannerisms would alter. He began to use the first-person plural and say “we” rather than “I” in those moments.

Dada’s story is quite unique. He had been part of the Theosophical Society and known U.G. Krishnamurti before either one of them experienced their transformations. They met up after those experiences, and it was at the urging and even help of U.G. that Dada set off for the States. Dada had also spent time with Meher Baba and J. Krishnamurti.

His teaching has the directness of Krishnamurti combined with the heart of being of Meher Baba. The following is from his book *Towards the Unknown*, beginning on page 57:

*The imaginative and fragmentary mind  
Can never discover  
That dynamic, effervescent energy  
Of eternal, timeless quality.  
The mind is the product of time.  
Whereas Godhood is timeless divine.*

*The dead past cannot contact  
The living present.*

*Time cannot contact the timeless.  
Shadow cannot contact light.  
Contracted polarity cannot contact enormity.*

He continues on page 62:

*At the cost of your own life force  
The mind is misusing energy,  
Scattering it everywhere  
In a very clever and subtle way,  
In petty little pursuits  
And self-intoxicating drives.*

And page 63:

*By close and alert watching  
Of all the movements of body and mind,  
You will discover that  
The constant ripples of thought  
On our life energy  
Are the cause of disquiet.*

He concludes with page 68:

*You cannot meet God through the mind,  
Nor experience the timeless through time.  
Thought cannot meet the omniscient.  
The eternal cannot touch the transient.*

*Only with freedom from thought  
And from mental cravings and ambitions  
Does the energy become  
Whole, tranquil and pure.*

*Such inner purity and humility  
Will invite the hidden divinity.*

*The pure consolidated energy,  
With its silence and fullness within,  
Awaits in readiness to meet the divine,  
To experience that which is beyond the mind.*

*There across the region of time,  
Beyond the frontiers of the mind,  
Within the sanctuary of silence  
Resides the supreme intelligence,  
Your Lord, the timeless divine.*

At the end of his stay, Santap and I took Dada to the airport. I was, of course, sad to see him go; such a sweet friendliness had surrounded us. We said goodbye and Dada boarded the plane with his carry-on. He believed in carrying his own baggage even in his late 70's.

A few years later, after Amido and I had moved from Boulder to Crestone, Colorado, we talked to Dada on the phone with the idea of bringing him there, but it wasn't to be. And in 2007, while traveling in India we emailed his contact person, thinking perhaps we would visit, but he was in silence and not accepting visitors. Dada left his body in 2012. Thank you Dadaji.

*Try as I might, I just can't find anything that is as great as nothing.*



## GOING INSIDE MEANS STAYING HOME

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When we say *to go inside*, it is really a misnomer. First, there is no going. Second, there is neither an inside nor an outside.

What we are really indicating is to stop going. Normally, we are constantly projecting. When a thought crosses our space, we project ourselves onto that thought and run with it.

Once we break that association, we are able to see a thought appear and at the same time there is space, and we are aware that we are not that thought. It is an appearance. By staying home, the thought scampers off to find another suitor.

The “practice” consists of this remembering and breaking the habit, the automaton that is our usual way of being. This in turn frees up energy that is normally consumed constantly. It also keeps from wearing out the mental mechanism which is not designed to be running constantly. Then, when it is needed for daily functions, it is fresh, rested, and ready to respond.

*There is no Way to Here and Now, but there is a Way out of There and Then.*

## INSIDE OUT

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We often speak of going or looking inside. But looking with careful attention, it can be seen there is simply no such thing as inside/outside. When we close our eyes and just watch whatever appears in our awareness, a bird singing, a thought passing, a sensation in the body, there is not any delineation between inside and outside. And it is the same when looking with open eyes. Either everything is outside, meaning outside of the seer and hence seen, or they are all inside, as all being contained in awareness. But I have found no distinction between inside and out.

As a result of finding there is no longer an inside opposed to an outside of me, it is discovered that the belief, that I am some being residing inside this body, is exposed as a mere fabrication. It is much more accurate to describe the situation as the body, and for that matter the rest of the manifestation, as residing inside my awareness. It is a bit like an inside-out sock that one pulls right-side out. It is here that the Zen story applies, “The Goose is Out.”

This revelation is more important than it might first appear. The inside/outside division the mind makes is part and parcel of the me identity, and when one sees, and I mean actually sees, not just intellectually understands, then the very foundation of the ego self is pulled out from under.



*Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, India*

*We don't meditate in order to gain something or even to lose something.  
Rather we sit in meditation for the sheer joy of no-thing.*



## THE SWITCH OVER

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Recently, I have been paying attention to the waking up process in the morning and have found that there is a point when there is a switch over from the sleeping-dream – to out of the dream.

At the moment of the switch, one is not identified with anything. One simply is.

It is only after some moments that the waking-dream begins, but those moments before it does, are suffused with awareness.

Then the day-dream begins and one is once again lost into the world.

*Can there be anything more important than seeing one's own un-enlightenment? I am grateful.*

*It is increasingly evident that it is not that some event is going to happen in the future and voilà we will be aware. We become aware by being aware in this moment. Awareness creates awareness.*

## HERE IN THIS WATCHING

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For those of us who are interested in discovering our real nature, our original face, our one true being, it is indispensable to see the distinction between thinking and watching the mind. We must see the difference between being lost in thought and witnessing the mechanism of the mind. We can see that when we are in thinking, we are not “present,” but when we watch the mind, without getting involved in the particulars of thought, we can feel our very own beingness. The more we recognize this distinction, the more we are drawn back away from thinking and into witnessing.

We do not sit and watch the mind in order to accomplish something but because we recognize that “here” in this watching we are nearer to our self than when we are out chasing dreams. Of course, we continue to forget and find ourselves time and time again lost in space, but each time we return to witnessing, we are breaking the patterns of conditioning, and are becoming more and more familiar with our beingness.

## LOVE IS ALL-ONE-NESS

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Love is the language of All-one-ness

Love means one, only one. No other. Not two. All Oneness. Aloneness.  
Love is Oneness. Not a relationship. A relationship can only be with more  
than one.

Two people can be in love but cannot love each other. To love another  
implies separateness.

Love is not separateness – it is oneness.

It is not that I Love – I Am love.

Love is all there is.

Love

## LIFE IS REAL ONLY WHEN I AM

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The ancient Indian philosophies say the world is *maya*. *Maya* is a Sanskrit word used to describe the unreality of the world. What does it mean to say the world is unreal?

First, it is important to see there are really two worlds. There is the world as it exists, a world without judgments, without names, and even without divisions. It is One world.

Then, there is the world that we see. And to be more accurate, there are billions of worlds that are seen, because each person sees their own world. We can experience this daily by watching different news reports. One television commentator sees the world differently from another. But it is not just political visions that differ. An environmentalist and an industrialist will not see the same world. A poet and a scientist will not see the same world. A Christian and a Moslem will not see the same world. Even two lovers will not see the same world. So the question is which vision is real?

All worlds are colored by prejudices, philosophies, religions, moralities, histories, desires, and fears. And because these qualities are projected on to the world by the personality – they are not real. If we can look at the world without any words, and that means without thought, then only can we see the real world. When we look at the world as we do most of the time, through the lens of our conditionings, past experiences, and hopes for the future – we are seeing *maya*, an unreal world projected on top of a very real existence.

At an even deeper level, when we look at the so called “real world,” scientists will tell us that it is not as it appears. We look out into the world and see separate distinct objects, but physicists will not agree. They see organizations of elements made up of protons, neutrons, and electrons surrounded by vast amounts of space that stay together for some time before disbanding and joining up in other groups. So the idea of real distinct solid objects is simply a fantasy. It is an appearance for some time, only to disappear later. It too is *maya*.

Understanding that the world is indeed *maya* frees us from the tyranny of our mind, of our projections. We begin to withdraw some of the support that sustains this unreal world – our belief in it. We understand that indeed the world is not

black and white, in fact, it is not even in color because colors too are false distinctions with labels supplied by our conditioning. We begin to rest more in the perceiving than the perceived. And it is this ending of projecting the unreal that restores our bliss of being that has been constantly dissipated by creating and maintaining the world of *maya*.

From this vantage point, we look at a sunset, and even that is an inaccurate description of the situation. We see a happening (what we refer to as a sunset) without comparing it to yesterday's event, without wondering where we will see it tomorrow, without even naming it or pasting qualities onto it. We simply allow the event to unfold without either grasping or rejecting.

From this vantage point existence or life simply is *What Is*. It follows then that to live in the "real world" it is necessary to live in a place that is outside of, free of, the mind and all of its projections. When I Am without any past, without projecting into the future, without dividing an otherwise indivisible whole, then, and only then, *Life is Real*.

*By being home, by being presence, we are able to greet the guest, welcome the witness, and dive into the divine.*





*Old Manali, Himachal Pradesh, India*

## BEING GOD

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It is time for humanity to grow up and take responsibility for its own divinity, time to stop shifting the responsibility onto some 'other.' We are divine and we need to start acting like it.

The second coming of Christ is Christ coming out in each of us. The coming of Maitreya is Maitreya's coming out in all of us. Every part of the globe has been reached by the teachings of His emissaries. Now is our time to step up to the plate.

Nietzsche was right when he said God is dead. The god of the past is dead and we can celebrate his passing. Now is the time for the living god, God in the living. We are the representatives and it is a tremendous responsibility. We must prepare ourselves. We must clean ourselves of confusion and childish thinking. Meditation is the cleaning tool.

We do not need intermediaries standing between the divine and ourselves. Jesus said the Kingdom of God is within, then why are we looking without? Buddha said, "Be a light unto yourself," then why are we searching for a lamp? We find the way by walking. There is no path to follow. We will be making the path with each of our steps. But we must start walking. We have to take courage.

We have to bring home, reel in, and withdraw all of the projections we have made to create a God. We are the creator. Let's bring that entire energy home and let it start living as God.

God is here and now as us Being God. Hallelujah. Amen.

## JESUS WAS A BUDDHA

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Jesus was a Buddha and Gautama was a Christ. Both of these enlightened masters were speaking from the same Ultimate Reality. And yet, within the teachings of Christianity, there seems to be such a narrow teaching – that Jesus is the only way.

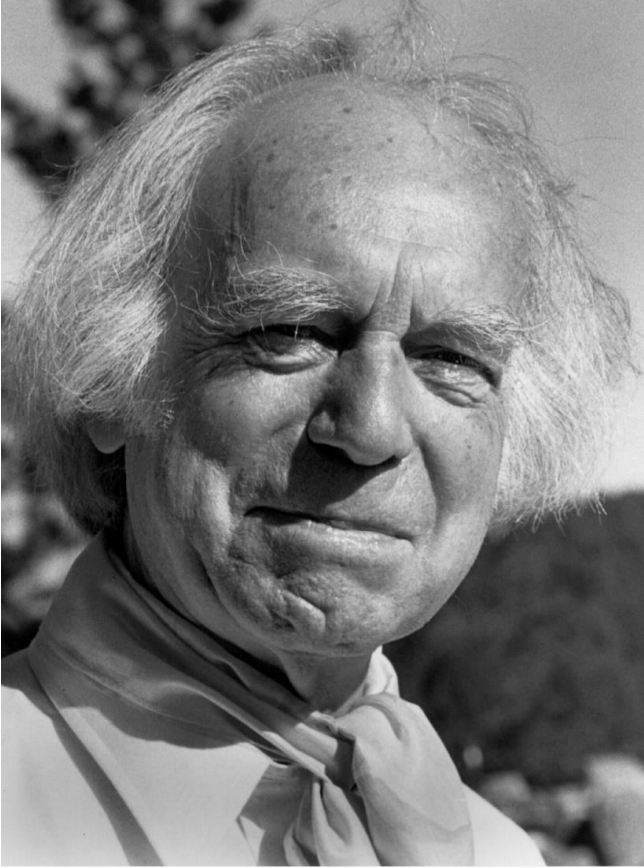
It seems that much of the conflict between Christianity and other religions stems from a couple of sayings attributed to Jesus. What if we just got the translation wrong, or they were not fully understood when they were spoken?

Certainly, one of the most repeated is quoted in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” And following that (and in Christians eyes makes it clear that Jesus is the only way), “No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.”

This statement can be looked at from a higher vision, from an unlimiting consciousness rather than the common narrow interpretation. Rather than “I am the way,” we could say “I AM is the Way, I AM is the truth and the Life.” What a difference is made by just adding ‘is.’ Looked at in this light, it is easier to understand the statement of Jesus in John 8:58, “I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.” In fact, it is the only way that the sentence makes sense. I AM is the ultimate subject, first person singular, which each of us is at our very core. It is this “I AM” that we have to return to in order to reach the Father.

## JEAN KLEIN: MASTER OF LISTENING

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The last time I saw Jean Klein was in 1996 in Santa Barbara, California. Amido and I had gone with him and his wife Emma to see the parade downtown. We had spent the weekend helping to care for Jean, giving Emma a break. Jean had had a stroke and was also suffering from dementia, although suffering is not the right word; I couldn't find another. He really didn't seem to suffer though it was clear that the conditions were affecting his body/mind.

Enlightenment with dementia, not two words you expect to experience together. Jean said he was not the mind. I found myself thinking, although unreasonably, that it would not be possible to have dementia with enlightenment. But if we are not the body and not the mind why should that be so? We know that Ramana Maharshi suffered from cancer. J. Krishnamurti's bodily sufferings are well known. But the mind suffering, somehow that seemed different. So, it was a good experience to see, from the outside anyway, enlightenment with dementia. The body, the mind were both suffering from the stroke and the dementia, and yet sitting with Jean, or just being around him, was as before. The lightness of being that was Jean was always present.

In fact, I received the strongest teaching, the sharpest Zen stick from Jean, during that weekend.

I first came to know about Jean Klein when a friend dropped by my new age music shop, *Mysterium*, in Boulder, Colorado. He handed me a copy of *I Am* and offered to leave it with me. After reading the back cover I immediately accepted.

*What you are looking for is what you already are, not what you will become. What you already are is the answer and the source of the question. In this lies its power of transformation. It is a present actual fact. Looking to become something is completely conceptual, merely an idea. The seeker will discover that he is what he seeks and that what he seeks is the source of the inquiry.*

Even before Osho left his body, I had become deeply interested in self-inquiry, in advaita. I was reading Nisargadatta Maharaj and Ramana Maharshi. Some shift had happened. Up to that point, meditation consisted of awareness focused on phenomena, sensations, thoughts or feelings, but now awareness was turning on itself. This felt to be the beginning of ‘inquiry,’ and inquiry seemed to be the entire teaching of Jean. Also, it was compelling for me that here was a Westerner who was a living master.

Discovering that Jean lived part of the year in Santa Barbara, I immediately made contact with the organization and was informed that a weekend workshop would be taking place in Joshua Tree, California, in a couple of months. Amido and I participated in the workshop. Later, we also attended one of his weekend gatherings in Santa Barbara. Soon we were making arrangements for Jean to come to Boulder.

During the question period in the Boulder workshop, I asked Jean, “So is it *this*, more and more subtle?” He responded, “I would say less and less conditioned.” Through the years I have found that statement to be extremely significant.

For me, the most important word in Jean’s teaching is ‘listening.’ He uses it in much the same way that Osho uses ‘witnessing.’ Do you notice how similar the two words are?

*We cannot precisely say what this listening is, because it is not a function. It is without intention. Being free from intention also means being free from concentration. In both we are looking for a target, looking for a result, but in listening we are simply open, directionless.*

*In listening there is no grasping, no taking. All that is listened to comes to us. The relaxed brain is in a state of natural non-function, simply attentive without any specific direction. We can never objectify listening, because that would mean to put it in the frame of space and time. It is listening to oneself.*

*In listening to oneself there is no outside and no inside. It is silence, presence. In this silence-presence there is a total absence of oneself as being somebody.*

*In listening we are not isolated. We are only isolated when we live in objects, but free from objects we live our essence where there is no separation. In listening there is not a you and not another. Call it love.*

-Jean Klein, from *The Book of Listening*

One night during his stay, Amido made a beautiful pasta dinner which we took to where Jean and Emma were staying. Over dinner we had some time for gossip. Jean said that he had once looked into one of Osho's books, *I Am the Gate*, and read where he was talking about Hitler. Osho says, "Hitler was a vehicle for other forces . . . He was just a means: he was used." Jean strongly objected to Osho speaking of Hitler in those terms. Jean had helped Jews escape from Germany during the war.

In those days, Poonja was very well known in the advaita circles. Jean didn't seem to have a very high regard for Poonja, but he didn't say why. He told us that Poonja had once stayed with him for some time in Europe. A couple of years ago, I ran across the following account of one meeting between Jean and Poonja in David Godman's book *Nothing Ever Happened*.

*Meera [Papaji's second wife]: It was a sort of dinner party that was attended by Papaji, Jean Klein and a small group of students from each teacher.*

*David [Godman]: What happened?*

*Meera: The disciples of the two teachers got into a debate about the teachings of their respective Masters, but the two teachers themselves kept mostly quiet. Though Jean Klein taught self-inquiry there was a lot of difference between his and Papaji's approach to liberation. Afterwards Jean*

*Klein advised all his students to stay away from Papaji, telling them he was a dangerous man with a dangerous teaching. He came up to me (Meera, Papaji's defacto wife) afterwards and told me directly that I should leave Papaji because I would be in great danger if I stayed with him any longer.*

*Jean Klein's character seemed to undergo a strange change that evening. There was a hostility and a rudeness in him that I had never seen on any of our previous meetings. He seemed to see something in Papaji that made him afraid. He wouldn't say what it was, but he did go out of his way to tell all the people there that for their own safety they should have nothing more to do with Papaji. It was a very strange response because he had previously seemed so calm and self-assured. I was very disappointed by his behavior and by the meeting in general. It was not a success.*

After the weekend, Amido and I drove with Jean and Emma to Rocky Mountain National Park which he enjoyed immensely and commented several times on how young the mountains were.

The next year we again invited Jean to Boulder. This time he came with Leif a longtime friend. We were having a difficult time finding the right space to put Jean up. Maitri who was working with the American teacher Gangaji came forward and said he could stay in Gangaji's mountain house. Gangaji would make other arrangements for herself.

On the day after the workshop, I received a call from Maitri asking if it would be possible for Gangaji to have a meeting with Jean and so it was arranged. At the end of the meeting Maitri phoned to tell me how much Gangaji had enjoyed the meeting. Leif said Jean too had enjoyed meeting Gangaji.

By this time, Amido and I were already planning to sell our house in Boulder and move to Crestone, Colorado. Because Crestone is such an alternative spiritual community, we thought it would be wonderful to arrange a workshop there with Jean.

By the summer of 1995, we had sold our Boulder house, bought a house in Crestone and began scouting out venues for Jean's workshop. Baker Roshi had started a Zen center and that was one possibility. A suitable building that was part of the Aspen Institute was another possibility. Before we settled on a site, Jean had a stroke and it was clear that he was not going to be coming to Crestone, probably not taking any trips, and certainly not to 7,500-foot elevation Crestone.

We received a call from our friend Sundro, who had been with Osho as well as Jean, telling us that he had returned from spending some time in Santa Barbara helping out after Jean's stroke. He told us Emma could use any relief that could be offered. Amido and I made arrangements to go for a weekend and off we went. Despite the circumstances, it was a remarkably intimate time with Jean. We were a small group, a friend of Jean's who was his caregiver, Amido (who is a nurse), Emma, myself, and of course Jean.

One afternoon, I had taken Jean out on the patio to sit and enjoy the sunshine. I was sitting with my eyes closed when Jean said to me in a very loud voice, "What do you want from me?" It was startling because Jean was always so soft spoken, often described as having the demeanor of a European gentleman. So to hear him speak so loudly and sharply was a shock.

I had been in some subtle way begging for his bliss. There was a part of me that was reaching out to receive, rather than diving into myself. I was going to him with a begging bowl, and in that moment, with that Zen stick, I could see very clearly and returned home in myself.

Emma and the aid reassured me that it was just the dementia speaking, but for me it was not. It was just what the doctor ordered, and I was grateful.

Saying goodbye to Jean after the parade, with my hands held in his, gratitude overflowing, and the light of awareness shining bright, I bid him farewell.



*The only thing standing between myself and this magnificent existence is me.*

## IS PAIN, PAIN?

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Jean Klein used to say that the word 'pain' is not the thing 'pain,' meaning that the word itself is not the experience of pain. That is the same for anger, love, etc. It is important because rather than actually experiencing the issue, be it pain, anger, etc., we relate to the word and all of the memory associated with the word.

If we feel that there is pain, it is more helpful if we experience the pain directly, immediately, without an intermediary like memory. We allow it to reveal itself without condemning or trying to eliminate it. Where is the location of the pain? What does it actually feel like?

When we do so, we may find that the pain is much smaller and less intense than we thought. At the very least, by experiencing the pain, we will notice that pain is an object in our awareness. It is not that we are in pain but rather pain is in our awareness. This is quite liberating.

*The more we identify that which we are Not, the less we are identified. Dis-identification takes place in meditation and dis-identified Awareness aware of itself is the very peak of Meditation.*

## NO BODY IS

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Jean Klein's seminars used to consist of two parts, the bodywork and dialogues. He said the 'bodywork' was for us to come to know that we are not the body, and the dialogues were for us to discover that we are not the mind.

Recently, the understanding 'I am not the body' was expanded to the realization that in fact there is no such thing as 'body.' The idea of 'body' is just an image that we hold in memory. But if we look carefully, we can see that that memory does not correspond to reality. It is more like 'bodying.' It is not a fixed entity.

Intellectually it is easy to understand that there is no independent separate entity called body. If we look from the viewpoint of biologists, we see that there are many organized systems. There are viruses, bacteria, cells, etc., and probably from their standpoint, they would tell you that 'they' are independent entities and would not know what you were talking about when you said 'my body.' If we look from the viewpoint of physicists, we see that there are atoms, neutrons, electrons, and whatever else they have named, and these objects are found in space. Around and between these particles exists vast amounts of nothingness.

But aside from intellectually, if we look with our own experiencing, we can see that what we refer to as 'body' is an ever-changing collection of processes which is not in any way separate from existence. It is sunlight being transformed into energy, elements being absorbed by cells and transformed into physiology. It is oxygen being inhaled and carbon dioxide being expelled.

What we have done with the mind, is drawn a false border around a bunch of processes in a moment in time. This image is then held in memory and we refer to that image as 'body.' Of course there is sensing but that is certainly not stagnant. It is constantly changing, and when I investigate, I am unable to find any border that delineates what we call body from the rest of existence except for that which is in memory. When I look with my own experiencing, not relying on hearsay, I simply cannot find the division of body.

And it is through meditation that we find exactly the same situation concerning that which we refer to as our 'mind.' Again, with careful examination we find there is simply thinking but not any 'thing' as mind. It is simply the activity of thoughts passing through our consciousness that we call the 'mind.'

The understanding that first we are not the 'body-mind,' and even more profoundly that there is no such thing as body-mind, leaves us free to be that which we are, pure subjectivity, consciousness without an object.

*Dis-identification can still see identification but identification cannot see dis-identification. No-Mind can see mind but mind cannot see No-Mind. In identification one is not aware of being identified, but in dis-identification one is still aware of the possibility of identification. Jean Klein used to say, "That in order to know who one is, it is first necessary to know what one is Not."*

*Just to say that there is no Not doesn't cut it.*

*Talley ho.*



Prayer stones, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India

## IN MEDITATION

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We sense the body not to become more relaxed, though that is a by-product. We sense the body to become aware of the one who knows the sensing.

We follow the breath not to come into stillness although that too is a by-product. No, we follow the breath to come to know the one to which everything appears.

And we witness the mind, the thoughts, not to become more silent but to come to be silence itself.

We witness all that we are not, and thus, be knowingly that which we are. We sense the body, follow the breath, and witness the mind to become aware of our own true nature not as an object to be seen but as the ultimate subjectivity.



*In meditation we turn our gaze inwards. We watch all the comings and goings of the body, mind, and heart. By watching all that we are not, we bring our consciousness home.*

*As meditators, we are not concerned with what is being witnessed but rather the witnessing itself.*

## HELPING OTHERS

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To be able to help others we must first help ourselves. Most everyone would agree with this statement. But if we look a little deeper, we find that we often engage in helping others as a means to avoid doing the inner work on ourselves. It is a way to avoid that work and still feel good about ourselves.

Ouspensky in his *In Search of the Miraculous* quotes George Gurdjieff as saying: “In order to be able to *help people* one must first learn to help oneself. A great number of people become absorbed in thought and feelings about helping others simply out of laziness. They are too lazy to work on themselves; and at the same time, it is very pleasant for them to think about that they are able to help others. This is being false and insincere with oneself. If a man looks at himself as he really is, he will not begin to think of helping other people: he will be ashamed to think about it.”



*Brick lady, Puri, Orissa, India*

## A SLIP OF THE TONGUE

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Woke up this morning and found my English slipping  
Maybe it's the result of all those years teaching it  
Can't find the distinction between God and happiness  
Are love and meditation two words or one?  
Not able to slip a sliver between the Tao and the Logos  
Used to be a division between me and you, what happened?  
Perhaps we'll just rest here before the word

## BEING AWARE

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While vacuuming the meditation room one day, it occurred to me that I can only Be Awareness by Being Aware. At that moment, my head banged into the doorjamb.

One can only Be Awareness by Being Aware. This means that if we are not being aware, if we are in thought, effectively, we are not being awareness. So, to say that one is always aware is simply conceptual. Mostly, we are unaware.

Rather than seeing awareness as an object and using mind as the subject, we should be seeing mind as an object which can only happen from the space of Awareness as the Ultimate Subject.

*Witnessing is both "the art of watching" and "the science of self-inquiry" all in One.*

## MEETINGS WITH TWO REMARKABLE MEN

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*Ajja and U.G. together in Bangalore*

### **Preamble**

When Amido and I were on Koh Phayam, Thailand, in 2004, we met a New Zealand couple named Ross and Karyn. They had a bungalow next to ours. We had never spoken until after the tsunami hit on December 26th, which apart from being destructive, brought people together. There was a palpable sense of oneness, with everyone experiencing this huge swell that went all around the Indian Ocean. You could literally feel and see the interconnectedness. Anyway, we struck up a friendship and found that we had many common interests, one of them was U.G. Krishnamurti. None of us had spent any time with him but we were all interested in doing so. I was particularly concerned with seeing him before he died.

A year later, we ran into Ross in Bangkok. He and Karyn were on their way to India, as were we. We talked about Goa and keeping in touch to communicate if we found a spot we really liked. A couple of emails later and they were at Arambol Beach, Goa, and recommended the place, so we made plans to meet up.



On our arrival in Arambol, we were walking into the village with our backpacks and wondering how we would find them when from the other direction Ross appeared on his way to some shop. We spent a couple of breakfasts sharing information and stories over very large bowls of fruit muesli at the Buddha's Smile restaurant.

Ross and Karyn met an English guy who had visited every guru he could learn about in India and kept a very well-documented address book. He told Ross and Karyn that of all the gurus he had seen the two that really affected him were U.G. and a 90-year-old sage named Ajja. They proceeded to relate the story this fellow had told them.

It went like this: He spent quite some time at Ajja's ashram in Karnataka near Mangalore and he kept wanting to speak with Ajja. He was continually told to go to the mediation hall. Finally, he was sitting in the hall and became tremendously angry; he just couldn't handle the experience anymore, so he grabbed his bag and walked down the drive to leave. As he was leaving, he looked back at Ajja and saw Ajja watching. And that was the end of his time there. But this experience somehow really affected him.

When I heard the story, I knew right away that I wanted to meet this man, Ajja. Karyn also shared with us an interview that Ajja had given to Andrew Cohen published in *What is Enlightenment?* Ross also told us that U.G. was going to be in Bangalore in February. This fellow had given them the contact information, but they were sworn to secrecy, so didn't feel comfortable sharing the details of the information that had come from him. They said that once they arrived, they would contact us, and in that way, it would be their information and not this other fellow's.

We didn't stick around very long in Arambol, as nice as it was; we wanted to go straight away to Ajja's ashram.

### **Bhagavan Arabbi-Nithyanandam**

We phoned the ashram from Mangalore, an hour and a half away by bus, to ask if we could come. The woman on the phone told us to come right away and we would be in time for lunch. When we arrived, Ajja was meeting with some Indians on his porch. We were told to hurry up and we could meet him. So, we took off

our hiking boots, and dropped our packs as quickly as we could, and had just enough time for a Namaste, then were told we could meet with him later. Lunch was being served in the dining hall. The food that was served at the ashram was simple and fabulous.

After lunch we were given a room. But very soon after our arrival, Amido and I needed to be separated because there were a few other visitors coming. Amido shared a room with a lovely Swedish woman named Ingrid, and I bunked (although there was no bed or mattress) with an Indian man who would be arriving later.



*Bhagavan Arabbi-Nithyanandam (Ajja)*

Besides Ingrid there were a couple of other foreigners, a German named Hans who had been coming regularly for a couple of years, and an Israeli named Giri who was together with a lovely English woman named Thea. In addition, Giri's brother was visiting along with a friend and his wife and daughter.

Later in the afternoon, an Indian doctor named Satish, who took care of organizing darshans with Ajja, paid us a visit. He wanted to get some background from us and learn why we were there. He asked us to clarify our questions if we had any so as to make better use of our

time with Ajja. He said he would talk with Ajja and let us know when it was time to see him.

In the meantime, Amido and I made use of the meditation hall and participated in the chanting and other activities. I found that Dr. Satish's question about whether I had any questions a particularly powerful engine for my inquiry. The question was – did I have a question? This whole process of wanting to see Ajja seemed to be one of the primary teaching methods for westerners. We heard many stories of westerners wanting to see Ajja and being told to go to the meditation hall. To most it seemed like some kind of punishment. For Amido and I, from the very beginning, we enjoyed our time spent there and really used the opportunity to explore deeply.

In the afternoon at tea time, the doctor came and told Amido and I some Indians were coming to visit Ajja later and we could try and tag along. He wasn't sure if Ajja would allow us to stay or not. It seemed it wasn't something that he could just ask Ajja. When Satish informed us of his plan, the other westerners present overheard and the lights went on in their minds. This would be a good opportunity for them too.

When the time came, all of us foreigners filed on to the porch for darshan with Ajja. Ajja came and sat down and immediately said you, you, you, etc. to all the foreigners, go to the mediation hall. Amido and I went right away and used the opportunity to explore all the feelings that were aroused. We were joined by Ingrid and Hans but the others didn't come.

So again, it was an opportunity to explore the question about a question. And when I sat with that for some time, I found that I did have a question. I was aware of a sense of awareness which somehow I could physically relate to the area at the back of my head. And I was also aware of an energy, a sense of being, that I would say somehow related to the area around my heart. My question became – what is the relationship between these two? It was not very long after formulating this question that it was answered in my meditation.

It seemed that the awareness of awareness was not an activity; there was no movement. But the energy that I felt around the heart was active, not static. What seemed to happen was the awareness gave attention to the energy, and with this attention, the energy became less active. It gradually settled, and when it had

completely settled, it felt as if it was absorbed by the awareness. That is the best way that I can describe what took place. In that merging, that joining, that absorption, there were no more questions. The question was answered in dissolving. And in that dissolving of the question there was light and bliss.

Our time passed wonderfully at the ashram. We found that there was some strange connection between Ajja and U.G. Almost everyone at Ajja's had been to see U.G. In fact, we learned that a couple of years earlier, Ajja, on two occasions, had been taken to the house where U.G. was staying in Bangalore. The first time, Ajja sat next to U.G. but they never said a word to each other. When Ajja left and was in the car ready to drive away, U.G. went outside and namasted to Ajja. The second time, Ajja sat next to U.G. and spoke for some time. Apparently, it was the rare occasion when U.G. actually let someone else speak. Ajja spoke Kanada, so only the local Indians could understand, but during that time U.G. was silent.

Thea was present during this meeting and it was the first time that she met either Ajja or U.G., and she met them both together. Thea continued to have a very strong connection with both Ajja and U.G. and would shuttle back and forth between Puttur and Bangalore. Several of U.G.'s close friends in Bangalore were regular visitors at Ajja's ashram. Because of this we had no difficulty getting all the information necessary for a visit with U.G. In fact, we were getting messages at the ashram as to the exact arrival of U.G. in Bangalore.

We participated in 'chores' around the ashram in the morning and also any other time we were asked to help out. Thea was the one who assigned jobs in the morning; in the afternoon someone might come and ask for help with some task or other. It invariably involved doing a very menial task with the utmost awareness. Because the ashram was so small, one was often within sight of Ajja, who would sit on his porch and oversee all the activities. And Ajja's presence was so strong that one was almost bowled over with the present moment. It was difficult **not** to be in the moment. His presence created a very powerful Buddhafield.

One day, Amido, Ingrid, and I were asked to help with some cleaning. Ajja had left the ashram and we were to help with cleaning the tile floor in his house. He had a very modest room but it was full of consciousness. There was 'that something' the same that I had felt whenever I had been in Osho's living quarters,

a certain sensing, clarity, presence, to be honest not unlike the heightened awareness accompanying some of my past LSD experiences.

Sunday was the day that many Indian visitors came. It was the day that even the foreigners could count on spending time in Ajja's presence. On the Sunday that we were there, we all went into the original house on the property which was a hut the musician lived in. It was small but there was a second story. The Indians and Ajja were downstairs and all of us foreigners were upstairs, just above Ajja. Bhajans were sung, music was played and it was a lovely time. Finally, Ajja asked for one of us foreigners to sing a song. I went blank, not a song came to mind, but Thea, bless her heart, sang "Lord of the Dance." It was really extraordinary because she is one of the most ethereal people I have ever met. In the beginning, her singing was rather meek, and then you could sense her taking courage and finding her power through the singing.

The following day was some kind of special day. It was a full moon. Musicians were coming and there was going to be quite a celebration. We sang and danced out on the ground in front of Ajja's porch. He came out and encouraged both the musicians and us dancers. There was a performance in which two speakers enacted a conversation regarding Rama and his shooting of Vaali with an arrow from behind. After the music and performance, a great meal was served. The whole event was wonderful.

Earlier in the day, we were asked what our plans were, and without thinking, I said we would leave the following day. It was going to be a week, and we had experienced so much, especially with the coming evening celebration, it seemed appropriate for us to move on. In addition, we now knew that U.G. was in Bangalore, and we wanted to go and see him.

The next morning, Dr. Satish came to visit us and said he would see what arrangements could be made for us to have darshan with Ajja before we left, but nothing was guaranteed. To be honest, Amido and I were so overflowing with the whole week, it really didn't matter if we would be able to have darshan or not. Of course, it would be nice but we would be happy whatever happened.

Hans had made arrangements and was planning to see Ajja that day as well. He was going to take his camera to have a photo taken with Ajja. We packed our things and prepared ourselves to leave after lunch. Sometime before lunchtime, a

woman named Kavita came and said, “The two people who are leaving today should come now.” I ran and told Amido and we were ready. I saw Hans on the way and told him what Kavita had said. He was not leaving that day so stayed behind. Kavita took us over to the porch. We sat in front of Ajja and Kavita translated questions about where we were from and our background. While sitting with Ajja, the whole group sang Bhajans. Ajja turned to us and asked us to sing a song we knew. Because of the experience on the day of Thea singing, we had at least thought of a song that we both knew just in case. It was one of the celebration songs from the Poona Ashram, *Asalaam Aleikum*.

The words are as follows:

*May the love we share here spread its wings*

*And fly across the Earth and sing*

*Its song to every soul that is alive*

*May the blessings of your grace Bhagwan*

*Be felt by everyone and may we*

*All see the light within, within, within*

*Asalaam aleikum, Aleikum asalaam*

*Asalaam aleikum, Aleikum asalaam*

*Asalaam aleikum, Aleikum asalaam*

While we were singing, I experienced what I had seen in Thea when she sang. In the beginning, there was a hesitancy but we continued through it and then a power took over and one just rode with it. Ajja smiled and asked where we had learned the song and we told him at Osho’s ashram and he said that it was related to his name. Ajja is just a nickname which means uncle but his name is Bhagavan Arabbi-Nithyanandam. The Arabbi is related to Islam. He transcends demarcations like Kabir, or Sai Baba of Shirdi, and so many Sufis of India.

At the end of the singing, Ajja said that we were very clean and didn’t have a lot of thoughts. I said that it was because we had spent a lot of time with Osho, and Ajja said that we had done a lot of work. I responded, “so not a lot more digging.” He said that now we needed to stabilize. He asked if we had any

questions and we said no, (my questioning had dissolved days before). Eventually, I piped up that yes there was one question, “Could I take a photo of him?” He agreed and had someone take a photo of Amido and me with him. After our time with Ajja, an Indian man, Sudarshan, had some questions. When they were answered he had more questions. Eventually, Ajja turned to Amido and me and said, “Look, this couple has no questions and you are here with me every day and you have so many questions.”



Dr. Satish came and reminded Ajja that Hans was still waiting and so he was called over. He had his photo taken with Ajja and we all sang more Bhajans and then ate some ice-cream. We must have spent close to an hour with Ajja and it was truly glorious. We said our Namastes.

After lunch, Sudarshan was the one, when everyone was having their nap, who stayed around and made arrangements for a rickshaw for us. He wanted to make sure that it came and the driver knew where to take us. We had been bonded in the sweetness of Ajja’s Darshan. And then it was time to bid farewell. It had been one extraordinary week.

## **U. G. Krishnamurti**

We had a hard time finding a room in Bangalore when we arrived late at night. Everywhere was full because one, it was the wedding season and two, there was a big “Art of Living” gathering in the city, with many visitors both Indian and western. In fact, we had to resort to calling an Indian (Shiva) who we had met at Ajja’s and had given us his phone number. We stayed at his apartment that night and left early in the morning. Shiva, his wife and mother were going to London that day.

After finding a place the next morning, we made our way to Chandrashekar’s home, courtesy of some very elaborate directions and a map. When we walked through the door, the first people we saw were Ross and Karyn. We entered the living room where everyone was gathered and watching a video on the television. We sat down on the floor without really surveying the room. In fact, I had been wondering where U.G. was when I realized he was sitting on the sofa watching the video of himself.

Soon the video was off and U.G. was telling stories. This is what his meetings consisted of at this point – gossiping with friends. Ingrid was there too. She had come from Ajja’s ashram and was sitting on the sofa next to U.G. We had tried to warn her about U.G., that he wouldn’t behave as she might expect an Indian holy man to act. He was throwing around the word bitch quite a bit and she looked uncomfortable.

It was a very informal arrangement and people would come and go at will. Because we were the new arrivals, U.G. directed some attention to us. Ingrid left and I suggested Amido move to the sofa where she sat enjoying being in his presence. When he learned that I was from the States, he directed all of his stories about the States towards me.

It really was quite an interesting experience. First of all, there was the heightened sense of presence, the same presence that I have experienced with Osho, Jean Klein, the 16<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, J. Krishnamurti, and also with Ajja. That presence was at the core, at the center. If you came out of that center, you could get caught up in the whirlwind that blew around his words. He used language that could easily throw you off your center. And it was not just the words but the energy had an appearance of anger at times, and yet if you stayed in the center, it was love.



We only visited for two days but, even in that short time, heard some stories so many times that I could finish them off myself. It was interesting to watch those that had spent a lot of time with U.G. They seemed to rest at the center. Others would get caught up in what he was saying. That can be seen on some U.G. forums where people actually believe what he was saying about J. Krishnamurti or Osho. To me, he was just shocking people out of their conditioning, but he also seemed cognizant of how far he could go without really hurting someone. He seemed sensitively outrageous.

We learned that many of our sannyasin friends had become very close to U.G. We met some at the house and learned of others that had been hosting U.G.'s stay in Palm Springs. We said our goodbyes to Ross and Karyn who were staying on. I was so happy that we had managed to meet U.G. before he left the planet. As it turned out, this was his last visit to Bangalore. When we bid him farewell, it was namaste, and I felt that we had connected with an old friend. The entire time he was so welcoming and loving in his unique way.

## **Postscript**

The following year we returned to India with the intention of visiting Ajja and then going on to Bangalore to see U.G. again. He was scheduled to be in Bangalore in February just like the previous year. As it turned out, we arrived at Ajja's ashram the day after he left the body.

We were able to take part in the ceremonies involved with the Samadhi, one of which was maintaining a chant through the night by taking shifts. Ajja was not cremated but buried in a traditional lotus Samadhi position. He had supervised the building of the structure to house the Samadhi all through the previous year. On top of the marble tomb a granite block was placed that had a small hole above Ajja's head. We took part in the last day of the ceremony, chanting around the Samadhi through the night. We spent only two days at the ashram this time because we could sense the ashram had a lot of adjustments to make, and we didn't want to be in the way.

The first day we arrived at the ashram, we learned that on January 31<sup>st</sup>, in Italy, U.G. had fallen in his bathroom and couldn't get up. He wasn't eating, he wasn't drinking water, and he wasn't passing urine. This information was coming to

Srinath at the ashram, who was in contact with Mahesh Bhatt, the longtime friend of U.G.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, Ajja had a stroke. He was hospitalized in Puttur. After some days, the doctor said that they couldn't do anything for him there and so he was transported by ambulance to Mangalore. We were told that when U.G. heard about Ajja he said, "I don't want to breathe, I don't want to eat, I don't want to be in this body."

Ajja left his body on March 12<sup>th</sup>, and on March 14<sup>th</sup>, we heard from Srinath that U.G. had sent everyone away and that it seemed he would be going soon too. We left the ashram and continued on our travels. We later learned that U.G. left his body on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. No one ever seemed to understand the nature of this strange connection between Ajja and U.G but it was a blessing to have met them both.

## MUSE ON DEATH

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One is afraid of death because  
one fears that time will continue without us.  
But time requires thought and death brings  
the end of thought, so time comes to an end.  
No worries. Time will not continue without us.  
We'll both go together.  
Birth and death are witnessed by others.  
For us, just a second-hand story.  
From my own experience, I was not born.  
The world just appeared one day  
and one day presumably, it will disappear.  
For those watching, it will be the death of me.  
For me, it will be the end of the world.

## WHERE DID THE TIME GO?

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It was only just the other day that it became absolutely clear to me that no one ever experiences time. It simply is not possible to 'experience' time. And when I say 'experience,' I mean perceive without thought. It seems to me that this illustrates that time only exists as a concept.

Of course, I have intellectually understood this before but I had not actually realized it until now. Time simply does not exist. It is only thought. It is, of course, a mechanical measurement, but even then, it is necessary for concepts to be involved. Without thought – there simply is no time.

And for that matter, the same can be said for space. And by space, I mean the experience of any other space than here. All experience takes place here. Experience cannot happen any other place than here. Again, we divide up the 'here' conceptually. But the division does not exist.

I am almost embarrassed writing these words because it is so obvious. But it is only obvious when seen in the moments outside the mind, or more accurately, prior to the mind. And from this 'space' prior to mind, nothing exists. By that, I mean there are not separate objects of perception. Those separate objects are again concepts. Do you see?



*Witnessing is the bridge from Becoming to Being.*

## FROM BECOMING TO BEING

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One of the most important milestones along the way back to our own true self is not just to have an intellectual understanding of, but to actually see, feel, experience the difference between becoming and being.

Being is always here and now.

Becoming is always somewhere else, in another time.

And the way to discover Being is by watching becoming. Being is the vantage point from which one witnesses becoming.

*Just because there is no 'doer' does not mean there is nothing that needs to happen.*

*With Unconsciousness – We are in the body-mind.*

*With Consciousness – The body-mind is in us.*

# MAKING THE TWO 1

---

No-body is Now

No-mind is Here

Aligned

I slips out

in two

the 1



*Seeing without dividing*  
*Loving without objects*  
*No-mind/Whole-love*

*Bodhi Svaha!*

## HERE TO NOW AND BEHIND

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*Hampi, Karnataka, India*

We begin from **Here**, where we are. We are in the particular. We are completely identified with all that we perceive. We see thoughts and consider them our own; we sense and believe the body to be our self. We sense emotions and think they are us. We say I am happy or I am sad.

So, from here we bring attention to sensing and become aware that sensing appears in our consciousness. Everything that we notice appears in our consciousness and yet we are aware of all things. By being aware of all that is in consciousness, we are out of the particular. Only that which is on a higher plane can perceive. We are, in a way, above and beyond all that we sense and yet it is in us. We have been identified with the sensing – we move now to the identification with the Awareness of sensing.

In this awareness of sensing, we notice sensation around the heart space. We pay attention to our breathing. We see that we can only perceive one object at a time. If we are paying attention to our breathing, we are not able to give attention to the thoughts that are dancing just on the periphery. It is almost as if our

attention is retreating from dispersion out into the particular and coming back home to our heart. It seems that all experiencing is a projection from this heart. Staying here with the heart, we notice that the energy that was occupied in the head is drawing down into the heart. We can almost feel it slide down into the heart. Perhaps down through the back of the head, down the spine, and into the heart cavity. This beingness we sense in our heart is nourishing, it is mothering, it is loving, it is welcoming. It is **Now** and we rejoice.

We realize that this being is indivisible. It is undifferentiated. It is Individual, and we are aware of it in us, in our consciousness. All of this experiencing is still happening within the space of non-experiencing, otherwise how could we possibly have perception? There must be a background on which the perceiving can manifest. This background, this unmanifest, this not-knowing, this unborn mind is our home in the absolute. We can never know it directly but can only infer it. It can never be an object of our awareness because it Is awareness. It is the ultimate subject. It is not divided although all multiplicity springs forth from this Oneness. This Awareness is never for a single moment not here. We cannot – not be in it.

This Awareness is our own true nature. If we remember the One to which all appears, if we understand that this is our one true abode and refer back to this unknowingness, this unborn mind, this original face, then it pulls us, it calls us back home. The pulling out into experience falls away and we rejoice, first in our beingness of the heart, and then even that experience leaves as we are rejoined from whence we came – back to **Behind**.

*To tell the one who is identified and is the doer that he is **not** the doer is pointless. One has to point the way to ending the identification. Then one is naturally no longer the doer but the witness.*

## NO-BODY IS ONE WITH EXISTENCE

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*How can one say, “I am one with the whole existence” on the one hand, and on the other hand state, “I am not the body”?*

These are not philosophical statements. They are based on one’s own experiencing. We can see for ourselves if we look at the situation without bringing in that which has been heard from others. If we can put aside memory and just look at the situation without prejudice, we can see the fact of the statements.

When we say, “*I am not the body,*” what is it that we are actually saying? Are we not saying that I am not the body separate from the rest of existence? To say that I am the body implies that I am separate, that there is the body which I am and everything else that I am not.

When I close my eyes and examine the situation after first putting aside memory, mind, and preconceived ideas, I find a different world than the one I had believed to be true. I experience sensing, and if I do not make use of memory, I do not find anything other than sensing. I do not find any distinctions within the sensing. Of course, if I make use of memory, then I can draw borders in my imagination that correspond to what I have been taught and to that which is held in memory as body parts. But in my own experiencing, I do not find those borders. I can perceive sensing which has varying degrees of intensity, and again with memory, I can zero in on a portion of sensing and in my mind draw a border around that portion to the exclusion of all other sensing – but this is not my own immediate experience. I am relying on memory and the knowledge of anatomy and hearsay, all of which are held in the mind.

In my own experience, I discover a single field of sensing without borders, without a center, and without divisions. If I look with my sensing, there is not that which is not sensing. How could there be? How would I know it if it was not sensed? In this experiencing there is only oneness. This experience is one. There is nothing that is not sensed in that moment of experience. In this sense it is my experience that I am one with the whole existence in my sensing. It is also true that there is no body separate from existence. I have already discovered that the defined border of body is held in memory but not in my own firsthand experience.

And so, it is clear in this moment with the mind put aside that “I am not the body but am, in fact, one with existence.”

# BE THAT!

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There is that which is so subtle  
and fine to be neither within  
nor without or both.

It is no-thing.

Be that

!

## A CUP OF TEA WITH VIMALA THAKAR

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*Vimala Thakar's Ashram, Mt. Abu, Rajasthan*

It was at Ajja's ashram in Puttur, Karnataka, that Vimala Thakar's name first came up. We were told that a woman lived in Mt. Abu who had become enlightened through J. Krishnamurti and that she was available for visitors.

On our way north through India we went through Rajasthan. We arrived in Mt. Abu and chose a guesthouse from *Lonely Planet*. After settling in, we informed the manager that we were interested in visiting Vimala Thakar and asked if he knew of her. We had chosen well. The guesthouse was located less than 100 meters from her house and the manager himself was a friend of hers. He called and made arrangements for an appointment for us the following day.

We arrived and were shown into a small sitting room where we met Vimalaji. A tremendous force of presence surrounded her. We introduced ourselves and told her that we were Osho sannyasins. She spoke to each of us about the names



Osho had given us. Vimalaji asked us about our travels in India and in general about the life we were living, allowing life itself to lead the way.

Over tea Vimalaji told us that Osho had invited her to Jabalpur to speak at the university where he was chair of the Philosophy Department. Osho took her out on the Narmada River in a boat and then to the Kwality Ice Cream shop in town. She said she chided him about his taste in food because it was not good for his health, and that she felt like an older sister but that Rajneeshji was Rajneeshji, meaning he wasn't one for listening to advice. Vimalaji also said that she was sad for what had happened to him in Oregon.



I told her that I didn't know much about her but had heard the story concerning her experience with Krishnamurti and wanted to ask her about it. She proceeded to relate the story that you will find in her book *On an Eternal Journey*. She stated that if one

wants to say that the transformation that happened to her was through the grace of Krishnamurti, she was fine with that. (*On an Eternal Journey* is currently out of print, but you can download it from [o-meditation.com](http://o-meditation.com) in the Vimala Thakar Downloadable Books Category.)

When our time was up Vimalaji gave us four of her books. The giving was a very deliberate act and seemed pregnant with significance. I had never read any of her books, but because of this event, I paid special attention and kept a look out for what might jump out at me and shout, "This! This! This is for you." Here is one such statement:

*In meditation, there is no movement. Life has no movement: it is only matter that has movement. Movement and energy are the property of matter. Life is is-ness without any movement whatsoever. That which remains without movement can be called neither individual nor universal. It has no center and no circumference. Intellectual activity has a center, the me, the self, the ego. Awareness as the activity of the intelligence has the whole human body, the human individual, as the center. Beyond awareness, the individual is not at the center. Nothing moves out of the individual. Nothing emanates or radiates from the person. Just as in the state of observation there is no ego-centered activity, so in the state of awareness, the whole cerebral organ does not function. Beyond awareness, the individual entity and the movements contained in the individual entity are simply not there. I wish that I could verbalize this more fully.*

—Vimala Thakar, from *The Movement of Mind*

This has proved to be extremely helpful. Thank you, Vimalaji.

*Unconscious not-being, to conscious being, to conscious not-being*

*First, I am not and asleep*

*Then, I am and awake*

*Finally, I am not and awake*

*When I'm asleep, I'm not,*

*When I **am**, I'm awake*

*When I am awake, I am **not**.*



*The River Ganges, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India*

## SOMEONE'S LEFT THE TAP ON

---

in the beginning, the words flow like water  
someone's left the tap on  
i become aware – the water is running  
the flow begins to slow  
enamored by the words  
the shapes of the letters  
the colors of the sounds  
noticing space between words  
i am drawn back into myself  
the space in which all these words appear  
and when the last syllable disappears  
there is . . .

*As my identification with the body decreases, the acceptance and (in fact) enjoyment with aging increases.*

## THE INVISIBLE MAN

---



When I was a kid, I used to love the movie *The Invisible Man*. I must have seen it five or six times, probably even more. I mean the one filmed in black and white, most probably the one from 1933 with Claude Rains.

Not too long ago, I stumbled upon the most amazing discovery. I don't think I have ever heard or read anyone speaking about this fact. In meditation, I discovered that my body cannot see me, neither my foot nor my hand, not my torso nor even my head. I can see them. I can perceive my body with my eyes closed, but it cannot see me.

I can also see my mind working. I can see thoughts. When I say see I mean perceive. I can see thoughts, but as far as I can tell, they can't see me. If they can, they must be using some other media because I am tied up looking at them. I can even see my feelings. Emotions show up and I can see them, but I remain unseen by them.

Of course, this makes me want to look a little further, and when I do, I see that it is the same when I perceive what I had considered to be anyone else. When I look at their body, or see their ideas, or even sometimes catch a glimpse of some emotion passing over them, I realize that these things cannot see me. I remain in the background.

It isn't much of a leap to realize that when I look at my wife Amido I am seeing all of those things, but they are not seeing me either. And it is clear that they also

do not see her. So, I too cannot see Amido, and she cannot see me. It's pretty hard to objectify someone if you can't even see them.

Wow, I am the invisible man and it seems that you, most likely, are too. But don't take my word for it. Have a look for yourself.



## THE NAMELESS ONE

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An ancient story:

Once there was a Master who understood the ways of mind better than most, who understood the myriad ways that his disciples could destroy his teaching after he was gone. He did everything he could to insulate the teaching from distortion and calcification.

Nearing the end of his life, he created a device in order to allow the great battle over his name to play out within the first generation of disciples. One of his last teachings was that the essential nature is – no-name/no-form. He dropped his name completely. But this created problems for those who would continue to publish the books and recordings of his years of talks. So, he allowed himself to be referred to as “The Nameless One.” And soon there was great work in changing all the books from his old name to being authored by “The Nameless One.” Soon his disciples would chant in great fervor, “Hail to “The Nameless One.” From a distance, one could not help but see the irony. Certainly, it was much more difficult the closer one was.

After the Master left the body, the situation slowly began to change. Little by little cracks appeared within the unity of his community. For utilitarian purposes, the organization charged with carrying on the work of publishing his teachings, was forced into the absurd position of copyrighting the name “The Nameless One” in order to preserve the integrity of his talks. Otherwise, anyone would be able to publish whatever they wanted in the name of “The Nameless One.”

And slowly over time, those within the organization began to believe in the actual existence of the name “The Nameless One” which they were trying to protect. They wanted to also trademark “The Nameless One” so that no one would be able to do anything in the name of “The Nameless One” without their permission, all the while failing to see the absurdity of the situation.

Having been schooled in awakening by the Master, the disciples were not ones to dutifully abide by the proclamations of the organization. They now began to argue, question, and challenge the authority to control the use of the name of “The Nameless One.” Within no time there were court cases and great public debate all concerning using the name of “The Nameless One.”

Soon, discussion and debate developed over even the meaning of “The Nameless One.” One camp proclaimed that it meant “the One without a name” and another camp declared that it meant that “there is no name for the One.”

Over time, these divisions became more and more pronounced. There were even personal attacks on the character of each of the camps. And each camp sincerely believed that they were doing what “The Nameless One” would have wanted them to do.

This great battle went on for years without pause until one day without explanation a few of the disciples in their meditation saw the absurdity of the quarrel. And in those moments of insight, the entire conflict just disappeared. Slowly, slowly this awakening began to spread throughout the community, and soon the lawsuits disappeared, the hostility towards each other evaporated, and the members were once again pursuing the realization of their own “Nameless One.”

In the following generations, the divisions never arose again having played out so completely within the first generation of disciples. Oh, what a genius this Master is.

## WHO AM I?

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My father is the sky in which I breathe  
My mother is the Earth on which I walk  
I know their son but I am not he.  
Then, who am I?  
My heart is love  
My head, insight  
I am both, no, neither.  
So, who am I?  
When I close my eyes, the whole world disappears  
When I open my eyes, I am reborn  
I witness all of life.  
But who Is this I?

# THE SEEING I

---

Before, there was a me and I was totally identified with this “me.” There was no separation at all. The “me” and I were one and the same. I felt that I was the “me.” There was no experience of I that was not the “me.”

Through meditation a seeing has arisen which is separate from the “me.” Let’s call it the “seeing I.” This “seeing I” can watch the “me,” see its arising, and see its dissolving. There are moments when the “me” is absent and yet the “seeing I” remains. The “me” is seen within this seeing. And yet many times this seeing still gets entangled with the “me” and only the “me” is present. And then a remembering, and the “me” is once again seen by the seeing.

It becomes clear from watching this changing landscape that the “me” is not necessary when the “seeing I” is present. And it also becomes clear that there may come a time when no “me” exists at all and only seeing.

But for now, it is a time for watching all the ins and outs of the “me,” a time for watching all of its comings and goings. And the more there is the seeing of these comings and goings, these ins and outs of the “me,” the more the “seeing I” is present.



*Lakshmi, the resident elephant, Hampi, Karnataka, India*



*Hampi, Karnataka, India*

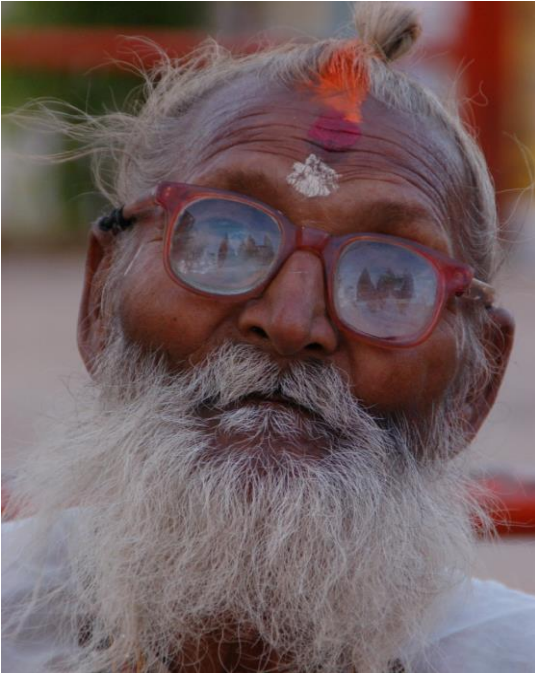
*If there wasn't no-thing there wouldn't be space for every-thing to exist.*

## DROP THE MIRROR

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When we look into the mirror, we see an image and because of memory we identify with that image as ourselves. With just a little bit of self-awareness, we know that the image that we see is not our real self but just a reflection.

It is the same with the images of thoughts and feelings. We perceive those images and identify thus creating ME. We then hold these images in memory and thus the ego is born. Thereafter, when we look out into the world, we first look through that collection of memory known as ME. It passes through the prism of collected past impressions.



But if we carefully examine the situation, we understand that those thoughts and feelings are just images on a screen, and with self-awareness, we experience the perceiving and know that I am not that which is being perceived. Now the ME has begun to lose its grip. Of course, the grip that the ME has is only what we give. It has no power of its own. It is inanimate.

Just as we do not walk around holding a mirror in front of us to relate to the world, we can also drop the mirror of ME. Now the world is That which Is.

## BECOMING VS. LONGING

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It is important to know the difference between becoming and longing. Becoming has to come to a standstill, but longing has to fully blossom. Becoming is moving away from our Self, and longing is moving into our Self.

There are those who for the sake of ending Becoming quash Longing. This is criminal.

## HELPING IN

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Many of us for whatever reason have some kind of inborn desire to help others, to make the world a better place. It seems pretty clear that what we have now in our world is a result of the efforts of “mind.” We see that “mind” can never be truly creative, can never be truly new. It is always coming from the past. All thinking is based on the past and so can never create anything that is not based on the past. It cannot create anything that is a jump into the vertical. It is always linear, horizontal.

We can see that if we truly want to “make the world a better place,” then we have to help others discover life “beyond mind,” outside of the prison of the past. And it follows that the only way we can help others discover life beyond mind is to make that discovery for ourselves. It is not enough to talk about it; but we have to be transformed by it. We have to allow it to absorb every vestige of the “me” in order to make room for life in now, in creativity, and in real love.

The next question is surely how to proceed? How do we come out of the prison of the mind? How do we make that discovery of life “beyond mind”? How do we live in “now”? There may be many answers to these questions. But I can only speak from my own experience of one, and that is meditation. And by meditation, I mean simply turning our attention onto the activity of the mind. Seeing the workings of the mind without interfering, without judging, without jumping into the duality of the mind, without getting involved in the yes-no. And it is this watching, this witnessing of the mind in its totality that liberates us from its clutches.

And the irony is that often what is keeping us from allowing that transformation in ourselves is our engaging in the activities of trying to make the world a better place. Our time may be consumed in social causes. We may be active in political movements. We may be trying to heal others. But all the while, we are ignoring the one glaring fact that we have not allowed our own transformation. We have been propping up the “me” through all this activity and so are still living through the mind.

So let those of us who have been blessed or cursed with the disease of wanting to make the world a better place get down to the real work that will pay those



dividends. Let us move “in” with a great earnestness, with a tremendous longing. And perhaps, we can actualize, we can realize that which we have been seeking: an Earth populated by beings in touch with existence; an Earth which is populated with whole, sensitive, creative beings who are not acting out of conditioning but out of the intelligence of the whole.



*Awakening is out-of-mind.  
Enlightenment is No-mind.*

## AWAKENING BEFORE ENLIGHTENMENT

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We hear the term ‘awakening’ thrown about today like a rag doll. And as is the case with almost all spiritual terminology, there seem to be levels and levels of meaning for the word ‘awakening.’ It is important to first recognize that we are not necessarily using a common language. When I see what the word ‘awakening’ is being used to point at, from the plethora of spiritual teachers that exists today, it is evident that it is being used to denote many different things.

And it is not just the spiritual teachers who use ‘awakening’ with different meanings; you can find references from the Enlightened Masters as well. There are times in the many books of Osho where he refers to ‘awakening’ as the final enlightenment, and sometimes he is pointing to a step that precedes enlightenment. I find the same situation in the works of J. Krishnamurti, Nisargadatta Maharaj, Ramana Maharshi, and Meher Baba. Although if one looks carefully at the context in which the words are being used, it is not as confusing as it seems.

However, in writing this I am not interested in repeating the words of those remarkable Enlightened Ones, but rather this understanding that I wish to share, is one that has been taking shape over the last twenty years and has only now become sufficiently stabilized that I feel willing to express openly.

Before we even begin to look at the different meanings we might ascribe to ‘awakening,’ let us first acknowledge that all individuals are moving through their awakening at a different pace. It is clear that we did not all begin at the same point. This is illustrated when we see that a sage like Ramana Maharshi realizes his enlightenment at the age of sixteen seemingly without effort. In contrast is the experience of Nisargadatta Maharaj in whom enlightenment happened much later in life. Some were prepared from their very childhood for such an event, and some worked through their own efforts at removing the obstacles to the ‘natural state.’ Some of us have lived a life centered in meditation from a young age, and some of us stumbled upon it much later in life perhaps after some major crisis turned our world upside down. So it is important to understand that just because we have not had a certain understanding does not mean that one of our fellow travelers has

not. It is equally important to note that if we have experienced some insight or transformation, it is not likely that many will understand what we are talking about.

So let us begin with what each of us (at least anyone who is reading this) has probably experienced. For some of us it might have come like a bolt of lightning, for others it may have always been intuited as truth. And that is that life, the world, is appreciably different from what we were conditioned to believe. Many may describe this realization as an awakening and indeed it is. This awakening would demark the beginning of the journey. It would denote a tremendously important change of direction and priorities in one's life.

Having changed direction in life, we embark on searching out information, knowledge, understanding, and perhaps a teacher to help guide us along the way. We may be fortunate and come across that guide early on or for some it may take many years. And some may not find the guide in whom trust is a natural and spontaneous flowering and so may just wander from teacher to teacher. Regardless, even without a guide, and certainly with one, it is possible, after an introduction to meditation, after reading the words of those who have known the greatest mystery, after the necessary inner work, to come to an "intellectual understanding" of the lay of the spiritual land. Jean Klein refers to it as a "geometric understanding." One can almost visualize the obstacles that lie before. This understanding often can come as a flash and could certainly be described as an 'awakening.' But here, it is important to note that this intellectual understanding is not the same as *being* understanding, is not the same as *knowingness*; it is more like knowledge.

Next, we come to what seems to me to be more worthy of such a moniker as 'awakening.' This is when one *realizes* oneself to be out of the mind's conditioning. The "goose is out." Here one is *being* out of the mind and is able to see the mind clearly as an object of perception. It is not that the mind has disappeared, no, but one is not living within the mind. And it is here that witnessing really emerges. In fact, this is the *witness*. The mind is still present but one is not captive to its many grips. But it is important at this stage to allow witnessing its full force through meditation. It is here that the "emptying of consciousness" must take place. If one is not mindful, it is extremely easy to slip back into the clutches of the mind. But one is also able to see the horizon. One knows what needs to happen. One cannot

make 'it' happen, but one does need to create the opportunity. With this awakening the taste is known and so it is natural that real earnestness arises.

For what follows, we will have to take the words and expressions of those who have known as a hypothesis. We accept the hypothesis and in our laboratory of meditation discover for ourselves if it is indeed true. The Enlightened Masters have all said that there does come a complete annihilation of the separate ego-mind, one that is irreversible, and surely it is 'this' that deserves the name "Enlightenment."

So here we come to the point that has been the fuel for this inquiry all these years. Without exposure to the presence of an Enlightened Master, and unfortunately for some even with, it is very easy to believe that the "awakening of the witness" is the end of the journey, is itself enlightenment. Some fellow travelers might very well believe that there is no ending of the mind because that is the limitation of their own experience. They become teachers and this then becomes part of their teaching, thus misdirecting their students. Just as importantly their unfolding stagnates, believing that they have reached the end thus not allowing the space for the "emptying of consciousness" to take place. This is where the exposure to a fully enlightened master should prove extremely helpful. The master does not allow us to make our house in the sand. He continually goads us to keep on to the very end. May we all continue to the very end, *Charaiveti, charaiveti* (go on, go on to the very end).

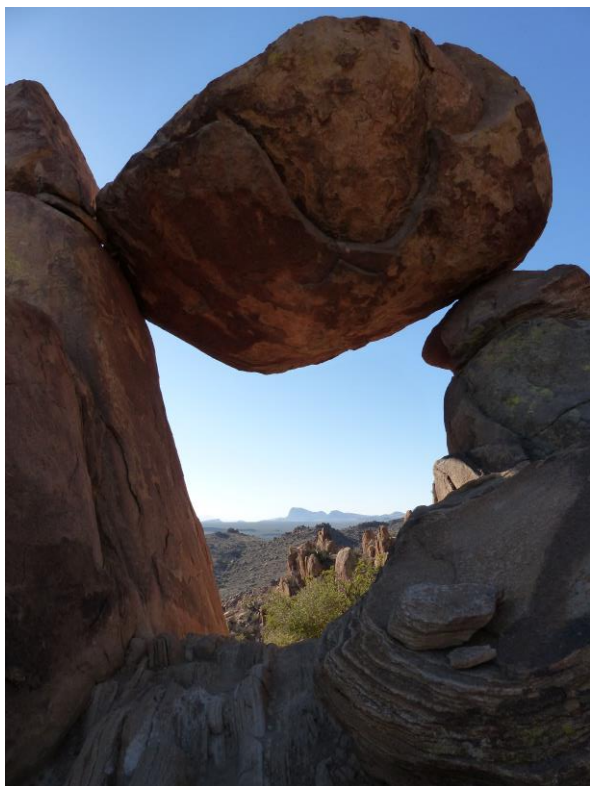
## DO WE NOT LOOK?

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Most of us spend almost all of our time in becoming. We are constantly moving to the next great thing. We are projecting out into the world towards a goal in the future. We are rarely here at home in this moment, in being.

What is driving this movement? What is powering this constant chase after the next? Is it not the hope of being happy sometime in the future? If we were happy now, would we still be chasing the future?

I wonder why it is that we are not happy now? Is there something that we have to obtain first and then we will be happy? Is there something that we have to do first, to make our claim on contentment? Or is it the chasing that is the source of our discontent? Is it not the desire for more that is not only the driving force for tomorrow but also the seed of our discontent today?



If we truly see the situation that we are in, do we need to do something to get ourselves out of it? How did we get in? If we bang our head against the wall, do we not change course the next time to avoid the pain? So, if we continue on a course that has never brought any real happiness, it must be that we have not really seen the situation. We have perhaps thought about it a bit but not existentially seen what is going on.

So, how to see? What do we do if we want to see something? Do we not Look?

So, let's Look, and that is where meditation comes in.

Meditation is simply giving some space to Look, to see what the situation is. We create an opportunity for life to expose itself – life itself – not our projection of life, but life as it is. We give space for reality to blossom.

And the miracle is – when we give that space and we Look at what life is offering at this very moment – then we are no longer in becoming. We are no longer, in that moment, chasing dreams. We are in this moment – Being. And Being Is Happiness.

## AN EXPERIMENT IN AWAREFULNESS

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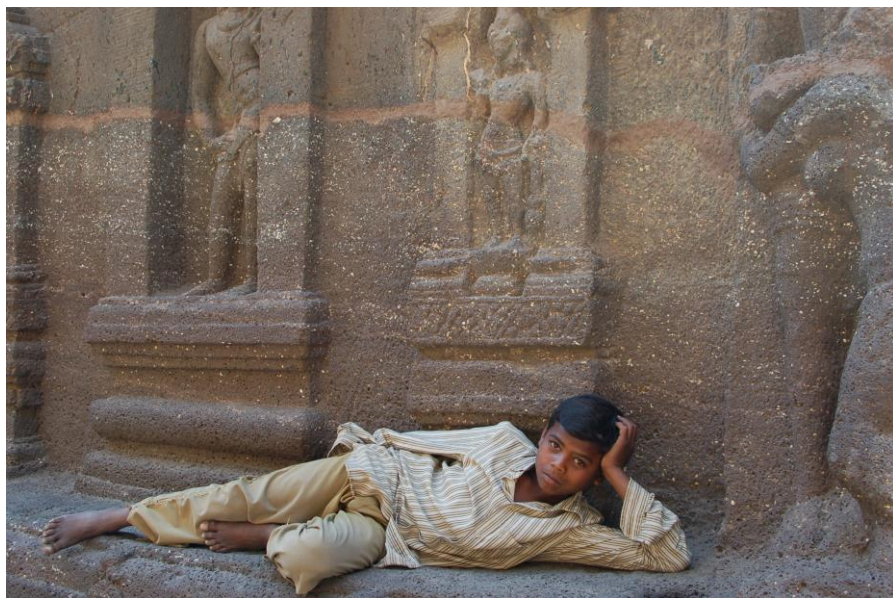
Ultimately, we are told, meditation is samadhi, *total relaxation in total awareness*. And we have heard, “The kingdom of God is within,” “Be a light unto yourself.” But for most of us this is not our experience at this moment. It is only theoretical, philosophical, hypothetical.

So, in order to determine the validity of such statements, we have to take them only as a hypothesis, and we have to experiment scientifically.

All meditation techniques are scientific experiments to discover our own inner landscape. They are tools to remove the tensions that prevent a natural relaxed state and to return unawareness into its natural state of awakened consciousness.

To be able to enter into this scientific experiment, we must first put all the hypotheses aside. We have to look without prejudice and see for ourselves.

We begin by entering the inner body. We know the outer body. It is the body that we see in the bathroom mirror and mistakenly think is who we are. It is the body that is an image in our mind made up of what everyone else has said about it or how we imagine others see us.



But  
to  
enter  
the  
inner  
body,  
we  
must  
*sense*  
the  
body  
from  
the  
inside.  
We

scan the body from the inside and discover any points of tension and make them



objects of our awareness. We sense the body's interiority and discover its wholeness as an object which appears within awareness.

With this strengthened awareness we *watch* the breath. We watch and follow the breath through its journey in and out of the body. We don't try to manipulate the breath but just watch its movements. In watching the breath closely, we discover the turning points where breath moves from out to in and from in to out. In watching the totality of the movement of breath as an object, we discover that it too appears within awareness.

Next, we *listen*, first to the sounds around us, secondly to the thoughts passing by, and finally to our feelings. We listen to the sounds around us without rejecting them, without judging them. We watch the movements of the mind without judging, without analyzing, without rejecting, and without grasping. We feel the emotions and subtle moods, again, without judging, without analyzing, without rejecting, and without grasping. And through listening, we find that the objects of sound, thought, and feeling appear within awareness.

With each of these steps we feel that awareness has been strengthened when the reality is that the identification, the unawareness, has been reduced, revealing the underlying naturalness of awareness. Slowly, slowly we begin to bask more and more in this awareness without objects.

By our own scientific inquiry, we have shined the light unto ourselves and discovered that indeed the kingdom of God is within.

Now it is up to us to bring this awareness into our daily life, chopping wood, carrying water. And in those times that it seems difficult to be aware, we can return to any of the steps of this experiment whenever we wish, and rebuild our awareness.

# THE AWAKENING OF MEDITATION

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We have all gathered to hear a talk on the awakening of meditation. But before we begin talking about the awakening, let us first consider what we are awakening from.

Most of us live our life with very little sense of our own being. We simply react to stimuli. There are well-established patterns in which our behavior travels. We live almost as if we are sleep walking. We walk around all day in a dream. We rarely have any contact with the real world, the world without the screen of mind.

Even when we walk in nature, because we desperately want that connection to what is 'real,' we walk in a dream. We are constantly preoccupied with our thoughts. Occasionally something shakes us momentarily from our slumber; it may be the sound of a bird or the sight of a meadow. But even then, very quickly, the mind rushes in and compares it to some previous experience. Some memory intrudes and we are taken away to another time and place.

For most of us, it is often some tragedy that shakes us to our roots and brings us back out of our dreams, face to face with reality. Some unexpected event throws our life in turmoil and we are brought into the moment away from our itinerary of life. It is in these moments that there is a great opportunity to change our course, to reexamine our priorities, and begin an inquiry into the essential questions of life. But more often than not it is only a brief alteration in our life-program, and once the crisis passes, we are once again living our life in the world of dreams.

A more potent opportunity for transformation comes when one has lived life fully and has been successful in following one's dream only to find in the end that one is as empty as when one began. There is more possibility for change here because one has already pursued dreams to the very end. All that energy that was being projected out, chasing rainbows, suddenly collapses onto itself, and a real conversion is possible.

Others have looked deeply into life and seen through the illusions that becoming brings. A keen intelligence can see through the fallacy of the promise of becoming. For them, even the 'concept' of living in the now has an appeal.

No matter how we arrive, by attending a talk on "the awakening of meditation" we show that we are hungering for an awakening. We know that the life we are

living is not a life of bliss, is not a life of love and laughter, is not a life of celebration, is not the life of enlightenment that we have heard is possible. So, we are interested in hearing what the speaker has to say about awakening and about meditation.

The title of this talk has been deliberately chosen because there is 'an awakening' of meditation that takes place, and it is meditation that brings about that awakening.

In order for us to make the journey out of 'becoming' and into 'being,' we must first come to see how we are continually propping up the straw man of becoming. We must see how we are continually projecting our consciousness out into the idea of a person. We must see how we are reinforcing the identification with a separate, limited body-mind.

So, we begin by creating the witness. We begin by bringing our attention back home, and we find that when we are engaged in any mindful act we have less unconsciousness lying about. We are both stopping the emitting of energy into unconsciousness, and we are creating the witnessing, the awareness. We are beginning the journey home.

With this newfound presence, we are ready to begin the journey in.

This is a journey from the outer body to the inner body. What is the outer body? The outer body is the body that everyone sees. It is an image. It is fat or it is trim. It is tall or it is short. It may be male or it may be female. It is the you that everyone sees.

But there is a body that only you can know. It is the inner body. From the outer body you make contact with the outside world through your senses. You feel the floor beneath your feet. You feel the warmth or the coolness of the room. You hear the sounds around you. But with the inner body you just feel, you sense. It is a global sensing. It is not divided into the five senses. It is a total sensing. It is more subtle than your body sensing. We feel a sense of ourselves without any definition. It is being. It is beingness.

It is here in this interiority that we are able to move deeper into meditation, into witnessing. It is here at our center that we learn the knack of watching the traffic of our mind without either rejecting and pushing away or grabbing and rushing into. It is here that we simply watch the flow of the river of thinking. We are not

controlling. We are more interested in the watching itself rather than the content of what is being watched. We are becoming familiar with the witnessing, with the watcher. The stronger the witness becomes the more we are at home, but this is not part of becoming. In fact, it is the opposite of becoming. We have simply stopped becoming; we have stopped the outward flow of consciousness and energy. Our attention is remaining at home, and the more the outward flow ceases, the more the at-homeness increases, the more we are aware of our Self.

When this witness crystallizes, then for the first time ‘we are,’ then for the first time the ‘master’ is at home. Then for the first time we know the “Awakening of Meditation.”

Buddha has said that there are only two mistakes one can make on the path. The first is not to begin the journey and the second is not to complete it. So, we must begin from wherever we are, and we should not stop until the awakening.

We are all part of a global *sangha*, a global community of those who are moving on the journey. And we can within this global sangha support each other, we can prod each other, we can challenge each other until each of us comes to our own awakening.

There are many pitfalls along the way, and to guard against falling victim, we can share in the wisdom of those who have gone before. And the biggest pitfall that we are warned against is the ‘illusion’ of awakening. The mind is very capable of appropriating the language of awakening and deceiving us into thinking that we have attained. It is very possible to come to an intellectual understanding, and in fact it is helpful to come to this understanding, but it is possible to come to this understanding and think, “Aha, I have attained.”

The real awakening, we have been told, is found in silence. It is not in language; it is not in words. If we need the use of language for our own experience of awakening then we can know well it is intellectual. When we arrive at the moment when we are able to ‘be, just be’ in silence without the traffic of the mind, without having to describe to ourselves our situation, then it is no longer intellectual. It is ‘being understanding.’

There are many techniques designed to aid us in moving into our interiority, and these can be helpful in bringing us to the place where witnessing begins. These techniques have been created in order to help remove the obstacles to our own



meditation. They are not teaching us meditation but helping to make meditation possible. They help to create the space in which our own natural meditativeness blossoms.

Once the witness is awakened then it is only awareness that will carry us on. Then ‘just sitting doing nothing the spring comes by itself’ is appropriate but not before. First, we must clear away that which is preventing us from ‘just sitting, doing nothing.’

The greatest meditation and the core of all meditation is watching. It is the witness, just watching

all that presents itself without being drawn into a fight for or against. Without our involvement, eventually, the mind loses steam. It is our involvement that powers it on. By just watching the mind, slowly, slowly it begins to break apart and the blue sky appears. By and by, the gaps appear, and we are left in our pure awareness. This is the “Awakening of Meditation.”

# THE ONE IN WHICH EVERYTHING APPEARS

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In order to dis-identify ourselves from the body/form, we make the body an object and watch our activities. We watch the body in the world without judging it, and by doing so, we become aware of the One in which all bodily activities appear.

In order to dis-identify ourselves from the mind, we make the mind an object and witness the activity of the mind without judging, without jumping into the fray, and by doing so, we become aware of the One in which all activities of the mind appear.

In order to dis-identify ourselves from the heart, we make the heart an object and feel the emotions, the moods, without judging, without pushing away, and without grasping. By doing so, we become aware of the One in which all activities of the heart appear.

When we are able to let go of all identification and remain conscious, all objects disappear and we become aware of consciousness itself, consciousness without an object. And it is here that we experience not as an object but as experiencing the One in which everything appears. This is the non-dual.

## FROM ORANGE SUNSHINE TO MEDITATION

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In early fall of 1968, a good friend of mine Michael and I rented a house in a predominately African-American neighborhood of Kansas City, Missouri, east of Prospect on the corner of 69<sup>th</sup> St. and College. Before we rented it, the house had been used as a neighborhood church. It had a big front room, which had been the meeting room, two bedrooms, one bathroom, a small kitchen, and a room that was used as a living room. The house was painted pink and had a somewhat flat roof, hence we called it the Pink Flat.

Immediately the house started gathering a commune within its walls. Michael and I would go around to building sites after dark and pick up discarded plywood, two by fours, and whatever else we could find, and bring it back to the house. We then constructed a loft around the perimeter of the big room so that there were two levels of sleeping spaces, and it began to fill.

We all made an effort to keep the house neat and tidy. Sometimes that required posting reminders. Some would remind us to wash our dishes, others would remind us to keep the bathroom clean. And all in all, it remained remarkably clean considering the number of people who lived there.



Sometime in late Spring or early Summer of 1969, the extremely pure form of LSD, Orange Sunshine, appeared on the scene in Kansas City. Orange Sunshine was unlike any LSD that had preceded it. One evening I took a dose of Orange Sunshine

at the Pink Flat. It turned out to be my most significant LSD experience and laid the groundwork for a lifetime with meditation at the center.

Once the LSD started affecting me, I left the house and walked around the neighborhood alone. I was a couple of blocks away from the house in some neighbor's yard when I started to experience hallucinations and paranoia. This was unusual for me; it was rare for me to experience paranoia and I was not prone to hallucinations. But on this occasion, it was happening. At some point it clicked that I was the one who was creating the hallucinations and the paranoia. And immediately, with that realization, the energy being projected from the mind started to go in reverse. It was literally as if I was reeling in the mind. And when all the energy that had been projected out returned home, there was peace, a clarity, an At-Homeness that I had never experienced so profoundly before. I was experiencing Being. I was at home, the ground of being.

It also became clear through this experience that I had had this realization as a result of taking the LSD but the truth of the experience of At-Homeness was because of an ending of mental projection. The seeing of this was enabled by the heightened state of consciousness from the LSD but the realization that took place was beyond the chemistry. I had seen, quite literally, how the projecting mind works.

This new found At-Homeness lingered for weeks, perhaps even a month or more, because I found I could return home by stopping the journey away from home. And the summer of 1969 continued to be a summer of awakening.

Most everyone in our Pink Flat commune began selling copies of *The Kansas City Free Press*, the local underground newspaper, on street corners as a means of income for the house. While I was creating a sales chart for our house sales, I experienced the "witness" as I watched myself (from beyond the me) draw the columns.

A couple of months later, after we had closed the house and everyone dispersed, I was on the Country Club Plaza in Kansas City selling the *Free Press* on a street corner when a man named Charlie walked up and introduced me to Meher Baba. And through Meher Baba I was introduced to *tratak* meditation.

Seven years later in 1976, I would find myself being initiated by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (Osho) in the city that Meher Baba had been born and grown up in,



Poona, India. And through Osho, a much wider world of meditation opened before me.



*Nicholas Sand (Deva Pravasi)*

If I remember correctly, I took LSD one more time in those seven years after the Orange Sunshine experience and before I arrived in Poona, and that was, as I saw it, some kind of self-checkup.

It is only within the last year that I came to know that the creator of Orange Sunshine, Nicholas Sand, also went to Poona, India, in 1978, and was initiated by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (Osho) and became Deva Pravasi. Ironically, his sannyas darshan with Osho is recorded in the darshan diary titled, *Turn On, Tune In and Drop the Lot*. Our paths crossed a few times at Rajneeshpuram but I didn't know that he had been the creator of Orange Sunshine.

I am extremely grateful to Pravasi, and his gift of chemistry, for giving me a glimpse of the workings of the mind and that first experience of no-mind which helped propel me to meet my Master, Osho.

Osho introduced me to the Meditation of watching the mind, and by and by, I discovered that the heightened state of consciousness that I had experienced with Orange Sunshine was none other than my "natural state." I discovered that this "natural state" is clouded with mind, with desire, with thought, with identity, and that it is possible to come clear of the clouds by watching directly the comings and goings of the mind. But the important ingredient to this watching is watching without grasping or rejecting, watching without judging, watching without jumping into the fray. And as one watches without interference, the energy that is involved in thought begins to return home. The mind is reeled in not by any effort and not by chemistry but by no longer being a party to the creation of the me.

Of course, as long as there are impressions remaining within the mind, one is drawn out again and again, but also it becomes easier and easier to return. This is the gift of meditation. This is the gift of Osho.

## AN INQUIRY IN BEING

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Ordinarily, we exist in what we might call the outer body. Our identification is through the senses which include the mind. We think of ourselves as others see us. We picture a body and a face that we have met in the mirror. Because others have varying opinions of our 'person'ality, our identity is somewhat confused. Sometimes we think of ourselves as kind and generous, other times we are mean-spirited. Some people perceive us as direct while others, as arrogant. Some people see us as strong, and other people see a weakling.

It is not that one perception is truer than another but rather that our real being resides on a deeper level than the personality. We know that our personality has been shaped in large part by our family, school, religious upbringing, social conditioning, and the interaction with the personality type that we are born with.

At some point, an inner longing to know ourselves on this deeper level arises, and this is the fuel to propel us on our quest. This inner longing wants to know itself. It wants to discover what is real and what is not. And so, the conscious journey begins. We look into psychology, we look into Yoga, we explore religion, we are pulled by the path of love, or alternatively, we discover meditation.

We can call meditation the conscious movement into the center. Meditation begins with an act of will. It begins with a desire to know oneself. In order to know oneself, we begin with mindfulness. We begin by bringing attention to each and every act we do. We observe ourselves eating. We eat with awareness. We witness the hand moving towards the plate. We watch the food coming towards our mouth. We pay attention to the tasting and then the chewing. We take note of how the food makes us feel. This attention to our acts can be extended to any of our activities when we remember and allow the time to do so.

Through this process, we are reclaiming our energy, our attention, which normally is being projected out into the world. It is because of this *scatteredness* of our energy that we have no sense of ourselves. There is no energy at home. We have scattered our energy by chasing dreams. When we begin the journey with mindfulness, we start reclaiming that dispersed energy. Now we have begun to reel in our attention, to bring home our awareness. We have begun the conscious journey home.

With this gathered energy, we can begin to direct the attention inwards. We enter the inner body. We feel ourselves from the inside. It is a more subtle form of sensing. It is not through the senses but behind sensing. It is a sensing in wholeness. It is undivided. We begin to sense a center to our being. We feel an inner flame.

With the help of meditation, we practice techniques that are designed to move us from the periphery into the center. These techniques are simply tools to help us make the jump out of the identification with our body-mind into the inner being, into the inner body.

So let us now in this moment, direct our attention to our interiority. Let us feel the sense of being in our interiority. Let us find that which is referred to when we say I. What is I pointing towards? When we point to ourselves, do we point to our head? No, we point to our heart. Let us feel from the inside that reference point, feel our center.

Following the breath is helpful in moving us towards our center. The breath is a link from the outer to the inner because it moves in both worlds. Watching the breath, following the movement of the breath, gathers our attention and starts focusing it inwardly. We simply observe the breathing. We are not interested in changing the pattern of breath but instead are interested in the observing itself. We want to strengthen the observer, and the breath is always available.

We feel our center, and resting in this interior space, we watch the breath. Incoming and outgoing. Incoming and outgoing. All the while our sense of well-being is increasing because our energy is resting at home. It is self-nourishing. It is self-healing. It is being in love. It is not love for something or someone; it is love, being love.

We notice that with this following our attention inwards, there is a feeling of energy moving down from the head and into the body cavity, into the torso. We may feel ourselves centered in the heart area or even in the belly, but we do notice a movement out of the head. It is through the brain that we project our attention outwards, through the senses including the mind, so when we redirect that energy on to its return journey, we feel that the energy moves back out of the head and down into the heart.



It is important to note that we are retracing the steps of the unconscious outer journey that we have made. We made that outer journey perhaps looking for ourselves or perhaps just in the spirit of exploration, but then we got distracted. We are now making the same journey but in the opposite direction. This means that at least unconsciously we know the way. We have already traveled the route.

It is in our interiority that we gather our attention. We feel ourselves. We experience Being. It is not the same kind of sensing as when we

sense an object in the outer body, it is a more diffused sensing mixed with a *knowingness*. This we can call Being. We know that we are and feel that we are.

It is with this gathered energy, this increased awareness, that we are able to begin to witness all that passes before us. Up until this point, we had no being with which to observe. We had no one to witness. Now this attention has created the witness. It is because we have moved beyond or below the outer body that we are fully able to be a witness to it. We are now able to observe the workings of the

body-mind because we have moved into the inner body. From this vantage point we are able to witness its comings and goings. We are able to watch consciousness emptying itself. It is from here that we allow our unconscious to see the light of day and dissolve into freedom.

Once we come to a *knowingness* of our being, we come to an individuality, we know ourselves as something quite apart from the outer body-mind. Then the real self-inquiry begins. It is from here we see that the inner body, the Being, is also an object in our awareness and let go into no-body, no-self.

## SITTING FOR THE SHEER JOY OF IT

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That which sees is not the mind. That is why Osho has us begin with watching anything. In the beginning, it is helpful to watch the clouds passing, watch the leaves falling, watch a stream flowing, or even watch the traffic passing. This is watching the outside world but it is the beginning.

We can then move to watching the activities of the body, watching without identification. This is the magic of the walking meditation. It is allowing us to experience watching the body walking which is strengthening the watcher, the one that sees.

Watching the breath is another way to strengthen this watchingness. We watch the coming and going of the breath, and we are coming out of the identification with breathing.

Moving deeper, we begin to watch the comings and goings of the mind. The very effort to watch the mind while we are still identified is how we begin to come out of mind. It does not need to be a serious affair; we are not against the mind. We are just interested in finding, discovering, the One who sees. This One who sees is always present in watching. The mind does not watch. The ego cannot watch. Our identification with someone who we perceive watching cannot watch. Always in the background the One who sees is present. We have the power to come out of mind because we have the power to identify with mind. It is not that some power makes us identify; we do that ourselves. Watching the activity of the mind without grasping, without rejecting, without judging, we begin to become less identified. Slowly, slowly the One who sees becomes less identified.

Osho has said that if we are able to witness the mind without identification then we can easily move into watching the subtle feelings, the heart, also without grasping. Without choosing the feelings we like, without rejecting the feelings that we find hard to witness, and without judging ourselves when we forget again and again.

The above presents Osho's directions but it has also been my own experience of meditation.

Although I must say that there was a long period of time in which I thought I didn't need to meditate regularly because I meditated all day long. That was a

delusion. It was not harmful because it was just an extended period of watching the outside. But at some point, I could no longer ignore the quiet invitation to begin to sit and watch the inner world on a regular basis. I was not watching because of some duty to practice, I was watching as an exploration, as an



experiment. Now I am sitting for the sheer joy of it.

So, we can begin from exactly where we are, this very moment, by watching what we are capable of and slowly, slowly the watchingness deepens. We are also very fortunate because Osho has devised active meditations to jumpstart this awakening, and has illustrated 112 meditation techniques that are doors in. And finally, he has distilled all meditation down to the art of watching, witnessing.



# FROM IN A THOUGHT TO OUT OF MIND

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*In a thought.*

*Watch a thought*

*Watch mind.*

*Out of mind!*

## **In a thought.**

Ordinarily, we live in thought. So even “in ‘a’ thought” is a step, because with ‘a’ thought there is already enough awareness gathered to recognize having been in ‘a’ thought. But when we are in thought, we are simply lost. But it is through this recognizing “in a thought” that we are gradually gaining strength of consciousness for the next step.

## **Watch a thought.**

With this newfound seeing, we begin to witness; we begin with watching a thought. It is, however, very fleeting. Either we enter into the stream of the thought and are lost until we remember and are once again at the beginning, or by watching the thought, the thought peters out and vanishes.

## **Watch mind.**

There is a big shift that happens when we move from watching a thought to “watching mind.” Watching mind means we are not getting into the separate thoughts but watching the energy of mind, the movement of mind. It is seen as an object, as a whole. It is in this seeing the whole of mind that we find ourselves in the next step.

## **Out of mind!**

It is from this “out of mind” that we are able to let all the contents of mind unpack and still remain the witness.

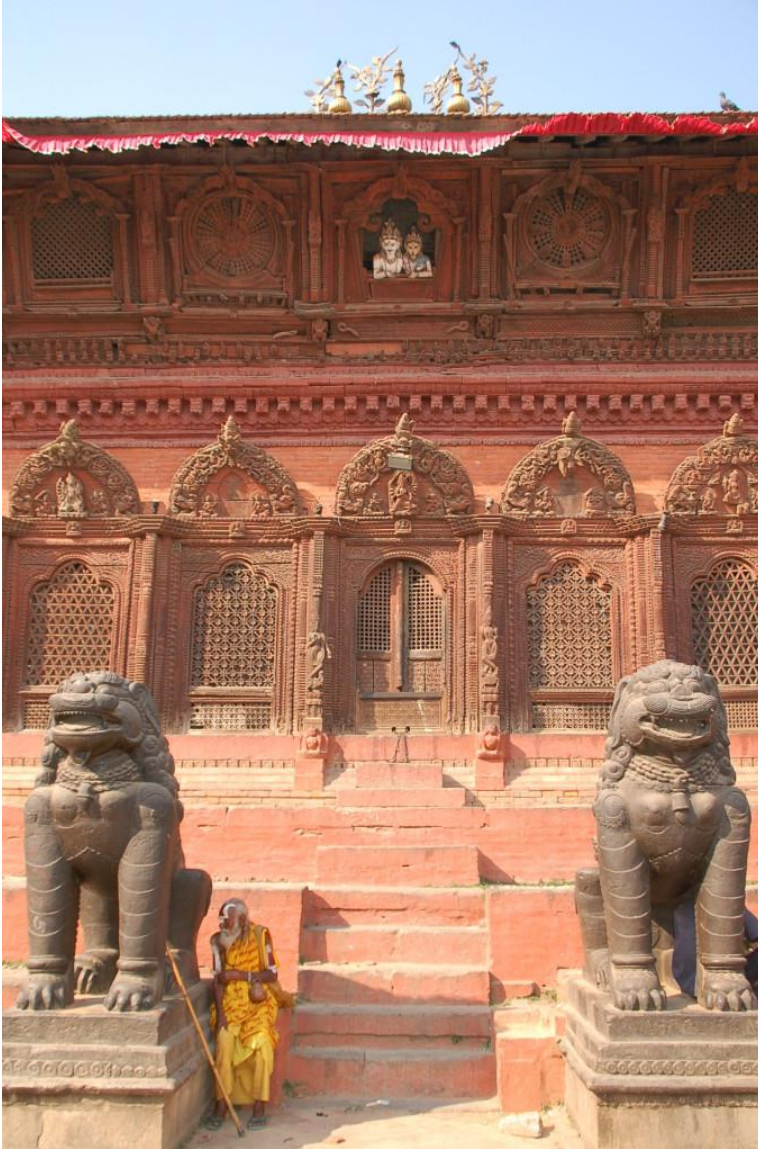
The sages don't talk of no-mind in order to create a far-off goal to be reached, but rather so that it can be recognized when we stumble into it.



# THE JOURNEY FROM NON-BEING TO NO-BEING

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We must first come to the recognition that we live outside of our center. We live outside of our body. We know our body from the exterior. We know our



senses by sensing objects. Without objects we have no knowledge of ourselves.

Through our contact with outside objects our body exists. If we had no contact, we would have no knowledge of ourselves.

Somewhere along the way, our center has been touched. We have become aware of its existence. It may just be a dim flame but we know deep down that it is there. We have the power to move into our center. It is only

because of what interests us that we remain on the periphery.

We can move to the center by retracing our steps out. We make the journey out all day long. Our attention moves from our center out through the senses and chases dreams. Our mind is the sixth sense. By becoming aware of the outward movement of our energy and attention, it comes to a halt. When the movement is seen in awareness, the movement ceases.

From where does the thought of “I” arise? What is it pointing to? Is it pointing to this body that people see from the outside? Does it point to this collection of memories, thoughts, and dreams that are circulating and referred to as “mind”? Is it not pointing to somewhere deep inside?

Let’s make contact there. Let us feel what it is like to inhabit our body. We need not worry about reincarnation; let us first learn to incarnate this body here and now. We can move our attention to our interiority. We can feel our body from the inside. We can sense ourself behind the senses. We can find ourself behind the mind.

It is from this interior position that we are able to allow the unconscious mind to let go of all its content. By not getting involved, but remaining a witness, the mind lets go of all its collectibles, all of its memories, dreams, and fears. Without either rejecting or grasping, without judging, we remain a witness and stay rooted in our center, in our interiority, in our being.

It is in this center that the witness grows, that we create our soul. Up until this point, we have had no soul. We have had no center. There was no one home. Now the fire is lit, and we are tending the flame.

The next step will be to let go of this center, but we cannot let go of what we do not have. We must first become crystallized. We must first come into Being before we can let go into No-being.

# MEDITATION IS THE BRIDGE BETWEEN YOGA AND ADVAITA

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Hakuin begins his *Song of Meditation*, “All beings are from the very beginning Buddhas.” Nisargadatta Maharaj tells us to take as a hypothesis that we are the “absolute” because it is not yet our experience. Osho begins his discourse series on *The Heart Sutra* with these words, “I salute the Buddha within you. You may not be aware of it, you may not have ever dreamed about it – that you are a Buddha, that nobody can be anything else, that Buddhahood is the very essential core of your being, that it is not something to happen in the future, that it has happened already.” But he goes on to say, “But you are fast asleep, you don't know who you are. Not that you have to become a Buddha, but only that you have to recognize it, that you have to return to your own source, that you have to look within yourself.”

This paradox, that we are already Buddhas but that we do not recognize it, is at the heart of much confusion today. It is here where those who are professing a neo-advaita philosophy clash with the gradualists, with the yogis. But there should be no conflict. It is just that each side is only seeing half of the situation. We Are already enlightened but it is Not yet our experience. We have not Realized our enlightenment, and until we do Realize our natural state, the work continues.

It is important for the neo-advaitins to understand that just intellectually knowing we are already enlightened does not a Buddha make. And in order to uncover that sleeping Buddha, there is a transformation yet to take place. And it is also important for the yogis to understand that we are from the very beginning Buddhas, and that our work is not to make us into something that we are not already, but to uncover our already existing true nature. Hence, it is not a question of becoming but of uncovering.

So, what is the bridge between this gulf in understanding? What is needed for the transformation from the potential to the realized to take place? When Nisargadatta Maharaj was asked what he did before his enlightenment was realized, he said that he accepted the words of his guru “that he was the absolute” and he meditated on the "I am" for three years. J. Krishnamurti has said that “seeing is transformation.” He says that it is the observation of the mind itself that is the

transformation. And Osho's entire life's work is to illuminate "meditation" as the bridge between our current state of living in the mind and the awakened life of no-mind.

So, if my enlightenment is only in words, only in concepts, and not in my daily life, then perhaps it would be best to continue on the journey back to Self and that journey must pass through no-mind. On the other hand, if I see enlightenment as a goal in the future of becoming, then too it would be good to come home to Being and out of the goals in the world of mind.

Meditation is the way in.



## LIVING IN CONSCIOUSNESS

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Consciousness has been at the center of my life for almost 50 years, as it has for so many of us. But I am a practical sort of guy and so am not much interested in conceptual “consciousness.” On the contrary, the consciousness that I am interested in is the “being consciousness.” There are many neo-advaita teachers around who tell us that we are always consciousness. And, since we are always awareness, consciousness, there is nothing to be done. Osho is much more compassionate. He too tells us that we are already Buddhas, but he also reminds us that the difference between us and him is that he is aware of his Buddhahood. He is experiencing his Buddhahood, and we are unawake to its splendor.

In his compassion, he introduced us to Shiva’s 112 meditation techniques (*The Book of Secrets*). He created active meditations to prepare the ground for meditation to take root, and he distilled all meditation techniques down to the key element of witnessing.

For me personally, I have found that the best way to become aware – to awaken the witness – is to begin by being aware of my unconsciousness, my unawareness, my dreaming mind.

Most every morning I wake up around 3:30 a.m., meaning at around that time I become aware that I am no longer sleeping. Immediately, I begin to look at the activity of the mind, the tail end of the dreaming cycle. I find that it is this seeing the unconscious that enables becoming more conscious, or we could say, less unconscious.

As I continue lying in bed, looking directly at the tail of the dream, this *awakeningness* becomes more pronounced. I find this to be the best time to get up and sit in meditation.

This sitting in meditation is more of the same but now I am sitting erect and perhaps more attuned to the watching.

At first, while I am watching I catch thought streams, some thought about this or that, but as I watch without grasping the thought and without rejecting the thought but just looking directly at the movement of thought, it becomes less defined, more opaque.

At this point, it is the energy of the mind that is being seen rather than individual thoughts. At the same time, I am now aware of the watching itself rather than that which is being seen. With my awareness of the *watchingness*, the previous objects of consciousness begin to slip out of view.

This is not a permanent situation. At some point, some thought appears and either I am dragged off until I remember again or I am awake enough to catch it



at the beginning, and again, without grasping or rejecting there is the remembrance of watching and the watched subsides.

I find that the unconscious stream is in an inverse relationship to how conscious I am in that moment. The more conscious, the less of the stream. The less conscious, the more present the stream. So, it is by seeing my unconscious that I become more conscious.

My understanding of Ramana Maharshi's method of inquiry is a thought appears, one inquires to whom does the thought appear, and the answer is to me. Then one inquires more deeply, "Who am I?" I see that as another way of saying what I have described above.

Osho's method is even simpler; it is watching, witnessing. Watching without judgement, without jumping onto the back of the thought, and without pushing it away in rejection. Just watching, and as we watch without reaction, the other steps that I described above happen naturally. As thought becomes less, I automatically become aware of my self, provided I haven't fallen asleep.

*"Meditation starts by being separate from the mind, by being a witness. That is the only way of separating yourself from anything. If you are looking at the light, naturally one thing is certain, you are not the light, you are the one who is looking at it. If you are watching the flowers, one thing is certain, you are not the flower, you are the watcher. Watching is the key of meditation: Watch your mind."*



*Don't do anything – no repetition of mantra, no repetition of the name of God – just watch whatever the mind is doing. Don't disturb it, don't prevent it, don't repress it; don't do anything at all on your part. You just be a watcher, and the miracle of watching is meditation. As you watch, slowly, slowly mind becomes empty of thoughts; but you are not falling asleep, you are becoming more alert, more aware.*

*As the mind becomes completely empty, your whole energy becomes a flame of awakening. This flame is the result of meditation. So, you can say meditation is another name for watching, witnessing, observing – without any judgment, without any evaluation. Just by watching, you immediately get out of the mind.”*

-Osho, from *The Invitation*, Discourse #21



So, this has been my experience. By understanding and seeing my un-consciousness, un-consciousness is transformed into consciousness, from unconsciousness to consciousness. This is how I come out of mind. This is not enlightenment; it is an awakening before enlightenment. It is nothing special; we are all capable of coming out of mind. It is just a question of seeing the identification with what we are Not that we discover that which we Are.

Along the way, a couple of points have become clear, and perhaps they may be helpful to someone else.

Number one, and this is of course obvious but nevertheless important to state. In order for the transformation of consciousness to take place, we have to look directly at the mind. It is not enough to know about meditation, we have to meditate. We have to get to know intimately how we perpetuate unawareness. We have to meditate; did I already say that. We have to meditate.

A second point that one day became clear is we are not to do anything with the mind, or any content of consciousness. Transformation happens but not by anything we *do*. Our job is to become conscious, and again we do that by watching

our unconscious. It is through watching the unconscious that the energy becomes conscious. I used to feel that it was the content that was important in the watching. Somewhere along the way a shift happened so that it is the watcher that is of importance not what is being watched. We watch our unconsciousness simply to become conscious.

And thirdly, it is by watching without reacting that we begin to become aware of being conscious, of awareness itself, not as an object but as a living, existential experiencing.

Finally, these awakenings, this watchfulness that arises in meditation, has to be taken into daily life. With this *watchingness*, there are more moments of action and fewer of reaction, but when reaction appears, it is watched without judgment just like the watching of thought. And, it is here in this daily life that the *watchingness* is crystalized into Being conscious. And that truly is a splendor.

## WITNESSING WITHOUT A CENTER

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Perhaps this may be helpful to someone. I have noticed recently that when I watch thoughts (content), there is a container (me). But when I watch the activity (not content), there is only witnessing.



This is important because it means that as long as I am engaging in the content, the “me” remains. And if I take one step back and watch the movement, witnessing is, without a center. And this witnessing without a center is delicious.

This “take one step back” is really a misnomer. It is not a question of doing anything but simply “not doing.” Engaging in the content is “doing.” To watch without either grasping or rejecting is not doing, and it is by watching without engagement that one finds oneself first witnessing the movement without content, and when that movement is also witnessed without engagement, then one is Not and only awareness Is.

## A FOOTPRINT IN CONSCIOUSNESS

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After watching the entire seven-hour documentary on Netflix, *Wild Wild Country*, the following poured out. Pranam to ALL.

Does anyone really believe – after hearing directly from the U.S. Attorney; Oregon State Attorney General; Bill Bowerman; those who we did not hear from in the series but whose opinions have been documented by Max Brecher in *A Passage to America* such as Edwin Meese, (U.S. Attorney General); Pope Benedict before he was pope (Joseph Ratzinger); and many more – after hearing from these people, does anyone really believe if we had just been a little more ‘good neighborly’ they would have allowed us to continue? Perhaps if all we had wanted to do was have a communal farm for a couple of hundred friends. Maybe. But I am doubtful even of that.

Osho wanted to build a city/commune, a place where thousands could gather and meditate together. In order to create that space, a lot of work needed to be done, but this work was to be done with awareness, with love. This was only

possible because of someone like Sheela and her “gang” who created a protective shell around the community for the meditators/workers to carry on. Her job was to keep the forces that colluded from day one to close us down at bay long enough for us to finish the job. You see, I do not subscribe to the belief that Osho ever intended Rajneeshpuram to be an ongoing, permanent community. It was as Osho has said about his community, “an experiment to provoke God.” We were creating a “footprint” on the Earth. A footprint of consciousness. Just the effort to create such a community was an opening in the consciousness of the world. It has been attempted before to lesser degrees and with each attempt the ball has moved forward. But this attempt was not scorning the use of science and technology. This attempt was not renouncing the world; it was an attempt that would bring Zorba and Buddha together in harmony. It would ultimately bring 10,000 meditators together in a city they had created for themselves. And in that work of creation, the effect would be that many of those who had worked on the project were transformed.

But in order to create this Buddhafield, someone was going to have play defense so the work could continue. Most of us inside the Ranch did not know the extent of the opposition to our very presence until the bombing of Hotel Rajneesh in Portland. And this event was a wake-up call for Sheela too. If we were going to survive long enough to complete the experiment, we would have to be able to protect ourselves. And the best protection was in showing the outside world that we **were** willing to protect ourselves and had the means. That was a language they could understand. We very publicly displayed our resources and even filmed our abilities at the shooting range. This was enough to create doubt. And in my mind, this is why nobody was ever shot at, no one was ever hurt by firearms.

In the *Wild Wild Country* series, you hear Shanti B. describe what it was like to be in the meetings with Sheela and crew. They would gather around and problem solve. For example, we weren’t allowed to have commercial activity at the Ranch; okay we’ll do it in Antelope. We weren’t allowed to do it in Antelope; okay we’ll buy up properties in order to control the decision-making. We weren’t allowed by Wasco County to carry on our activities; okay we’ll bring in more voters to the county. Where can we get more voters? How about the homeless people? Good idea, and then we can do two things, we can help the homeless and elect out

representatives too. They were just problem solving to the best of their abilities. All the while “running interference” so that the work at the Ranch could continue.

In life we have projects that we are working on, and if we are very determined, we try every avenue to success, but sometimes we just have to recognize “the jig is up” and let go. In hindsight, it appears that being about to lose the Wasco County Commissioner election was one of those times. Many will say that we shouldn’t have tried to affect the election with the Share-A-Home program, and that is probably true. But just as it is one-sided to talk only of the benefits of the program (bringing the homeless off the street, exposing street people to meditation, giving a sense of self-worth to those who felt abandoned, etc.) without talking about the well-known ill effects, so too is it one-sided to ignore these benefits. By the way, yes, there were some who were forcibly removed, but there were also some who remained to the very end, long after many of us had found new homes.

But clearly, when we were not able to affect the election with our newfound comrades, that was the time to realize we had done all that we could do. And Sheela should have been willing to let go of her position if that is what it meant. It is interesting that Osho decided to begin giving discourses again the very night we had a voter rally with the homeless. I think he knew “the jig was up.” We would be able to continue with the momentum created for just one more year.

Now, how to unwind this experiment that many had mistakenly thought was a permanent utopian dream?

Fortunately, Sheela provided the answer for most of that too. It was her own unwillingness to accept defeat, to let go of power, that would be the means for unwinding the commune. The crimes that were committed in order to hang on to power were the means that allowed the external forces to extinguish the experiment. But the experiment had already succeeded. We had already created a city of 10,000 meditators. We had created a beautiful eco-friendly community in the desert. And in the process, all of us were transformed to varying degrees. It was time to let go.

Osho saw the situation and very wisely left the Ranch which avoided the confrontation that the Oregon National Guard, FBI, State Police, and local law enforcement feared.

Osho returned to India with a few stops along the way. Many sannyasins joined him to listen to his talks for a couple more years. (He still had a few things to say.) Others took whatever light had been ignited in “the experiment” and went out into the “marketplace.”

Do you really think that if it had been someone different in Sheela’s place the result would have been better? Personally, I doubt it.

It goes without saying that none of this would have taken place without Osho. I bow down. But perhaps, what is not so obvious, is that each and every actor is essential in this play.

So, I bow down to everyone who participated in whatever way you did, and I don’t exclude anyone. Everyone played their part which includes the residents, the RHT workers, the festival workers, all of the visitors, those that stayed and those that left, those who never managed to make it to the Ranch, and those that stayed to the very end. And how can I bow down to Sheela and her crew without also bowing down to the residents of Antelope and Wasco County, the government officials, and the Rajneesh Hotel bomber because without any of you, there may not be that “footprint in consciousness” in the Oregon desert.

# HOW MANY ARE BETTER THAN NONE?

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Before there were any, there were none.

Those who were none had the wisdom of all.

Those who had the wisdom of all had nothing.

Nothing makes for a wise choice

and need not make sense.

How many are better than none?

Who says what is wise?

Before there were any,

there were none

to say.





## AFTER AWAKENING BEFORE ENLIGHTENMENT

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Back in 2011, the essay “Awakening Before Enlightenment” came gushing out onto the computer screen. I was very reluctant to edit it at all because it didn’t feel like my writing. It just poured out.

Now almost seven years later, it seems like perhaps it is time for a checkup. In the last paragraph it was written:

*So here we come to the point that has been the fuel for this inquiry all these years. Without exposure to the presence of an Enlightened Master, and unfortunately for some even with, it is very easy to believe that the “awakening of the witness” is the end of the journey, is itself enlightenment. Some fellow travelers might very well believe that there is no ending of the mind because that is the limitation of their own experience.*

What is the landscape now at this time? What has changed?

Through these last years, I have spent even more time exploring coming out of mind. I have experimented with many of Shiva’s 112 Meditation Techniques explained by Osho in *The Book of Secrets*. And with each I have discovered that same core that Osho points us to again and again, witnessing.

And it is from here that the mind is witnessed, that one sees all the ways to get entangled, and these are not just seen once or twice but again and again. But each time that seeing happens, the strength of the proclivity lessens. It becomes easier to come out, easier to let go of grasping, easier to remain with that which may be uncomfortable.

And yes, more moments do come, and longer in duration, where one is without thought.

When thought subsides, one is capable of exploring the region of feeling. Not feeling with a tour guide who is naming all the sights but feeling, just feeling. Feeling the very sensation of moods, and sometimes the feeling of burbling, gushing, raw emotion of some long forgotten happening.

And yes, moments also come when all thoughts and feelings subside, and one is left with only a sense of being.

And this sense of being, this wavering in the belly, is witnessed, is seen, and in that very seeingness when the seeing is total, even that sense of being, that ripple comes to rest. In these moments there is “an ending of mind.”

Surely this momentary “ending of mind” is “*samadhi* with seed.” It is with seed because the seed remains and because the seed remains it invariably re-sprouts. Nevertheless, in this moment I am refreshed.



So now I can revisit the post and still say yes, for me, it is true that “awakening of the witness” is not “the end of the journey.” In fact, it is the real beginning. The beginning of the end of “me.” And in this witnessing, there is a “knowingness” that exists without any support. It is self-evident.

It is also important to emphasize that “the ending of me” does not come about by any doing on my part. I am not dissolving or evaporating my mind. Any such activity would only strengthen the doer, the “me.” The mind does dissolve, it does evaporate not because of any doing on my part, on the contrary it does so because in those moments I am no longer contributing to its survival. My energy is with that “knowingness.” And because I am residing at home (in those moments) there is no energy feeding the “me.” And I am perfectly happy to let all of the un-entangling, all of the exposing, all of the evaporation proceed without any interference and bask in the moments of “now-here” that appear on their own.

And still the refrain, "*Charaiveti, charaiveti.*"

## NOT TWONESS

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One summer day when I was Junior High School age, I must have been 13 or 14, I was sitting across the street from the house of two brothers who were friends of mine. They were eating lunch and I was waiting for them to finish so that we could continue on our day's routine of playing in the neighborhood, riding our bikes, smoking in the woods, all the things that we liked to do.

While I was sitting on the ground under a big tree with stick in hand and drawing circles in the dirt, time stopped, and for a brief moment a window of oneness opened. In that moment, all movement of time came to a standstill, and I was being in the eternal now. It was as if a portal into reality had opened. I knew it was significant but that was all I knew. It only lasted a couple of moments, seconds probably, but it made a deep impression in my consciousness. Of course, at the time, I would not have used such terminology as eternal now, portal, consciousness. In fact, I didn't even mention the experience to my friends when they came out of their house, but this was my first experience of what we could call *Oneness*. In that moment, there was no separation, no demarcation, only beingness, conscious beingness.

Looking back, I can see that this experience unconsciously became a litmus test, a North Star, that guided my life on through experimentation with drugs, psychedelics, and finally, to discovering meditation. I would be willing to bet that every one of us who has found themselves interested in a life of discovery, anyone who is reading this now, has had some brush with naked reality.

It is clear that this reality I stumbled upon is always present, it is only that most of the time I am not present to meet it and dissolve into it. Meditation has been the key to shining a light on what it is that is standing between my consciousness and this experience of oneness, and that is mind, thought. It is thought, the me, which obscures the perception of reality. It has been my experience that through meditation the movement of thought becomes illuminated. And it is this 'seeing' of thought that is the exit.

For many years following this first awakening, I was unconsciously searching to replicate that profound happening, beginning with becoming unconscious through alcohol. Unconsciousness is a type of oneness, as is sleep, but it is

unconscious, and so is missing a key element of the experience that had happened years before. Next it was on to smoking marijuana, certainly much closer to the happening but dependent on a foreign substance, not a natural state. Then it was on to psychedelics, which were incredibly helpful in seeing how mind works, first in seeing thought in action, and then in seeing that I was the one who was supporting the movement of thought through identification.

This discovery of the workings of mind inevitably led to discovering meditation, first through the teachings and being of Meher Baba, and eventually, of course, to Osho.

I arrived in Poona in 1976 and every nook and corner of the Ashram was exuding Oneness. Upon entering the gate, one was absorbed into the vastness that lived in Lao Tzu house. We sang in Music Group and were lost in ecstasy. We did our groups and had glimpses of being outside of our little ego selves. We did the active meditations and rays of sunshine would find their way out from the center of our being. And, of course, we sat in discourse and darshan and the sun itself lovingly dismantled all the clouds obscuring the brilliance of our inner light, the Oneness within.

At the Ranch we witnessed Oneness in action. We saw what could happen when a group of meditators worked without the need for approval or compensation. We worked and loved the working, but this oneness was a *group* oneness, a collective. It did give us another opportunity to experience a certain type of oneness, but because it was a group oneness, it was a oneness that was by definition opposed to the 'not group,' to the outside, and therefore could not be sustainable, definitely could not be eternal.

It was after the Ranch that I realized I had to dive deep into inquiry, into meditation. I had to find that oneness that had been experienced so many years before for myself, without the aid of drugs or others. I had to rediscover exactly what was standing in the way of my own experiencing of oneness in this moment.

And so, it was time for doubling down on meditation. It was time to discover for myself what is this 'witnessing' that Osho keeps talking about. Do I really know for myself? And in this quest, I became deeply attracted to self-inquiry and the path of *advaita*, non-duality.

In one of the discourses where Osho is talking about advaita, he says something that had a strong impact on me. He says, and I am paraphrasing here, that advaita means not-two, and so it is easy to translate that as one, or oneness, but he says that there is a difference in how the two words or phrases feel or act on you. When you say or think the word ‘one’ or ‘oneness,’ there is a contraction, a solidification, it feels like an object. But when you say ‘not-two,’ there is a letting go, and so is a much better pointer to the actual experiencing of oneness.

Similarly, in a workshop that Jean Klein, a Western Advaita teacher gave in Boulder, Colorado, in one of those moments when meditation is exuding all around, I asked Jean, “So is this it, just more and more subtle?” And Jean responded, “I would say less and less conditioned.”



And that is the key. It is not that we need to be searching for this thing called ‘oneness,’ but that we have to simply see what it is that is preventing us from Being in this Eternal Now that we

refer to as oneness, or perhaps better described as *not twoness*. And that takes me back to meditation.

By meditation, I mean closing my eyes, sitting in a not uncomfortable but alert position and watching whatever appears on the screen of my consciousness. Sometimes it is a cacophony, and sometimes it is just a meandering quiet stream. But whichever, I watch, and every time that I forget and I become aware that I have forgotten, I am back to watching. Slowly, slowly I discover how to watch without judging, without grasping, without rejecting, and without analyzing. And in this watchingness, the flow of traffic decreases and occasionally gaps appear,

gaps in which there are no thoughts. And when there are no thoughts, there is no movement of time, there are no obstructions to experiencing this same Eternal Now that was stumbled upon so many years ago. But this time it is conscious, it is not accidental, and it does not depend on any circumstance, substance, or any other person. And these moments cannot but infuse our everyday life with more lightness of being.

## YES, AND LET GO

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Meditation is a journey of Yes and Let Go.

We say yes to the body and let go of pain and pleasure.

We say yes to the mind and let go of unhappiness and happiness.

We say yes to the heart and let go of sorrow and joy.

And by letting go of the contents of body, mind, and heart we find ourselves in Being.

Being is Bliss. Bliss is uncaused. Being is Love, Love which is unaddressed, Love without an object.

Love is Being.



*When for the first time you Are, you know because the very nature of Being is Knowingness.*

## BE THE LAST POEM

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And now we come to the end  
Or is it the beginning?  
It is here we start afresh  
So much is gone  
How much is unborn?  
We take leave of becoming  
Being what has always been  
If only we had known  
From the very beginning  
That we are what we  
Be

*THAT which has always been, IS at this very moment, and will always BE, I AM.*



*Meditation Hall, Ajja's Ashram*

## About the Author



Prem Purushottama Goodnight is a traveler and an inquirer. He has explored Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America. He has lived in Germany, Madagascar, India, Japan, Thailand, Hong Kong, and of course his native U.S.A. Traveling the world has been a major part of his life but meditation has been at its center.

Prem was first introduced to meditation through the teachings of Meher Baba, but living in the ashram and communes of the enlightened mystic Osho is where his being became grounded in meditation. Prem also has had the good fortune to spend time with other mystics, teachers, and misfits through the years: the 16th Karmapa, Dada Gavand, Jean Klein, Ajja (Bhagavan Arabbi-Nithyanandam), U.G. Krishnamurti, and Vimala Thakar. Each and every one of these remarkable beings has enriched his life in meditation.

He now lives with his wife Amido in Atlanta, GA, maintains the blog site [Sat Sangha Salon](http://www.meditation.com) at [www.meditation.com](http://www.meditation.com), and still loves to travel whenever possible.

