

**The Core of
Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj's
Teaching**

By

Pradeep Apte

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First Edition

Preface

On many occasions I had been asked to describe the teaching of my Guru Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj in its most essential form, this book is an outcome of that effort. I have added another section titled '*Netlogues*' which is a selection of correspondence through e-mail I have had since the publication of '*The Nisargadatta Gita*' in February 2008. I have received several mails from all over the world but I have included only those that I found to be interesting and of some value to the spiritual aspirant. Please understand that there are mistakes in grammar in these mails (They have been corrected only in the best possible manner) and the opinions expressed are solely those of the ones who sent these mails.

**Dedicated to the 'Sadhaka'
(Spiritual practitioner)**

SRI NISARGADATTA **MAHARAJ**

THE CORE OF HIS TEACHING

By
PRADEEP APTE (aptep@yahoo.com)

1.

Understanding the ‘I am’, your sense of ‘being’ or just ‘presence’ is extremely important as on it rests the entire outcome of the teaching.

2.

You have ‘to be’ before anything else can be, your sense of ‘presence’ or the feeling ‘I am’ is really fundamental to anything that has to follow.

3.

This sense of ‘being’ or the feeling ‘I am’, was it not the very first event or happening before any of your living experiences could begin?

4.

Apply your mind, go back in time and try to recollect the moment when for the first time it dawned on you that ‘you are’ or ‘I am’. This nascent ‘I am’ is without words or non-verbal.

5.

This ‘I am’ is still there with you, ever present, ever available, it was and still is the first thought, refuse all other thoughts and come back there and stay there.

6.

Establish yourself firmly in the 'I am' and reject all that does not go with it.

7.

Only the 'I am' is certain, it's impersonal, all knowledge stems from it, it's the root, hold on to it and let all else go.

8.

When the 'I am' goes all that remains is the Absolute, give all your attention to the 'I am'.

9.

The 'I am' is the sum total of all that you perceive, it's time-bound, the 'I am' itself is an illusion, you are not the 'I am' you are prior to it.

10.

Immortality is freedom from the feeling 'I am', to have that freedom remain in the sense 'I am'.

11.

The beginning and the end of knowledge is the 'I am', be attentive to the 'I am', once you understand it, you are apart from it.

12.

You must meditate on the 'I am' without holding on to the body-mind, the 'I am' is the first ignorance, persist on it and you will go beyond it.

13.

Your Guru, your God is the ‘I am’, with its coming came duality and all activity, stay on the ‘I am’, you are before the ‘I am’ appeared.

14.

Remain focused on the ‘I am’ till it goes into oblivion, then the eternal is, the Absolute is, Parabrahman is.

15.

Remember the knowledge ‘I am’ only and give up the rest, staying in the ‘I am’ you will realize that it is unreal.

16.

Understand that the knowledge ‘I am’ has dawned on you and all are its manifestations, in this

understanding you realize you are not the ‘I am’.

17.

When this concept ‘I am’ departs there will be no memory left that ‘I was’ and ‘I had’ those experiences, the very memory will be erased.

18.

With the arrival of the primary concept ‘I am’, time began, with its departure time will end; you the Absolute are not the primary concept ‘I am’.

19.

Appearance and disappearance, birth and death these are qualities of ‘I am’, they do not belong to you, the Absolute.

20.

Out of the nothingness, the ‘I am’ or beingness has come, there is no individual, the knowledge ‘I am’- not the individual – has to go back to its source.

21.

By meditating on the knowledge ‘I am’ it gradually settles down at its source and disappears, then you are the Absolute.

22.

Go on to know the ‘I am’ without words, you must be that and not deviate from it for even a moment, and then it will disappear.

23.

Get stabilized in the primary concept 'I am' in order to lose it and be free from all concepts. In understanding the unreality of 'I am' you are totally free from it.

24.

Sitting quietly, being one with the knowledge 'I am', you will lose all concern with the world, then the 'I am' will also go, leaving you as the Absolute.

25.

Putting aside everything, stabilize in the 'I am'. As you continue with this practice, in the process you will transcend the 'I am'.

26.

The very core of this consciousness is the quality 'I am', there is no personality or individual there, reside there and transcend it.

27.

Keep focused on the 'I am' till you become a witness to it, then you stand apart, you have reached the highest.

28.

When you remain in the 'I am' you will realize everything else is useless, and then you are Parabrahman, the Absolute.

29.

The One who abides in that principle by which he knows 'I am' knows all and does not require anything.

30.

Just sit and know that 'you are' the 'I am' without words, nothing else has to be done; shortly you will arrive to your natural Absolute state.

31.

You have to realize that you are not the body or the knowledge 'I am'. You as the Absolute are neither, nor do you require them.

32.

The Absolute or the Parabrahman

is prior to the 'I am', it's the unborn state, so how can it have or even require the knowledge 'I am'?

33.

You have to transcend the 'I am' to enter the concept-free Parabrahman state, where you do not even know you are!

34.

One who has realized the knowledge 'I am', which means transcending it as well, for him there is no birth or death nor any karma.

35.

Witnessing happens to the state prior to your saying the words 'I am'. Right now, right here, you are the Absolute, the Parabrahman. Hold on

to the 'I am' very firmly, ever abide in it and it'll dissolve, then you are as you are.

36.

You are neither the 'I am' nor its activities, you as the Absolute are none of these. Be a true devotee, by abiding in the knowledge 'I am' thereby transcending the experience of death to attain immortality.

37.

What is it in you that understands this knowledge 'I am' without a name, title or word? Sink in that innermost center and witness the knowledge 'I am'.

38.

Totally accept the knowledge 'I am' as oneself, and with full conviction and faith firmly believe in the dictum 'I am that by which I know I am'.

39.

Catch hold of the knowledge 'I am' in meditation and the realization will occur that 'I', the Absolute, am not the quality 'I am'.

40.

Do nothing but stay in the knowledge 'I am', the 'moolmaya' or primary illusion, and then it will release its stranglehold on you and get lost.

41.

In deep meditation, infused only with the knowledge 'I am', it will be intuitively revealed to you as to how this 'I amness' came to be.

42.

To do away with body-mind sense or identity, imbibe or dwell in the 'I am'. Later the 'I am' will merge into the ultimate nature.

43.

Having acquired and understood the knowledge 'I am' stay there in seclusion and don't wander around here and there. Once you stabilize in the 'I am', you will realize that it is not the eternal state, but 'you' are eternal and ancient.

44.

The teaching is simple, when the ‘I am’ arises, everything appears, when ‘I am’ subsides everything disappears. Onto your Absoluteness, which is without form or shape, came this knowledge ‘I am’, which is also without shape and form.

45.

This knowledge ‘I am’ has spontaneously ‘appeared’ on your Absolute state, therefore it is an illusion. The feeling ‘I am’ is itself an illusion, therefore whatever is seen through this illusion cannot be real.

46.

When you meditate on the knowledge ‘I am’, which is the beginning of knowledge, how can

there be any questions? It is not with the body identification that you should sit for meditation. It is the knowledge 'I am' that is meditating on itself.

47.

You should identify yourself only with this indwelling knowledge 'I am'. That is all. Sit in meditation by identifying with the 'I am', dwell only on the 'I am'- not merely the words 'I am'.

48.

Forget all about physical disciplines in this connection and just be with the knowledge 'I am'. When you are established in the 'I am' there are no thoughts or words.

49.

It is the 'I am' that investigates the 'I am' and on realizing its falsehood it disappears and merges into eternity.

50.

Along with the knowledge 'I am' appears space and the world. When the knowledge 'I am' departs the world is liquidated.

51.

My Guru taught me what 'I am', I pondered only on that. My original state is to be in that state where there is no 'I am'.

52.

Catch hold of the 'I am' and all obstacles will evaporate, you will be beyond the realm of body-mind.

53.

The 'I am' in body form can reach the highest state only if you understand, accept it and dwell there. Then you escape birth and death.

54.

The body identity cannot get this knowledge, the knowledge 'I am' must get this knowledge; when knowledge abides in knowledge there is transcendence of knowledge.

55.

The 'I am' has great potency, the entire manifestation has come from it. When you dwell in the 'I am' as your destiny you realize that your

destiny is not death but the disappearance of 'I am'.

56.

Go to the 'I am' state, remain there, merge, and go beyond. If you were to dwell in the 'I am' and firmly abide in it, all external things will lose their grip on you.

57.

You are the Reality beyond the 'I am', you are the 'Parabrahma'. Meditate on this and remember this, finally this idea, too, shall leave you. Understand the 'I am', transcend it and realize the Absolute.

NETLOGUES

1.

Dear Pradeep

I am quite taken by your sure intellect and clarity with respect to Nisargadatta. I too have found him profound, but also puzzling.

I am still perplexed. Can you help me understand?

Is the Absolute only conviction and not experience?

If it is not direct experience, but by inference, does this not make it also only a concept?

Ramana makes this mistake many times. For example, he says when you awake, you say I slept well. This means you know I slept well. This knower is the absolute.

Actually, when I say I slept well, it means I did not toss and turn as a body. There were times when I was not "awake conscious." When I awoke my body felt fresh and healthy. There is no need to create the idea of the Absolute who was aware in sleep.

Ramana also says existence = consciousness. If you are not conscious of it, it is not real. You are not conscious of the body when you sleep, so the body is unreal. BUT, you must be conscious during sleep otherwise, you would not remember sleeping well. This is Advaita nonsense. Ramana should have known better.

However, Nisargadatta does not make this mistake. Ah, but the the Absolute, Parabrahman.

Now, my questions:

As I take it, I-Am, the sense of presence, is added onto the pure consciousness that exists after birth until the age of three or so, whereupon the I concept and the network of thought begin to be added. Also, at that time, the network of thought becomes identified with the body sense.

But what about before the birth of the body? That pure consciousness arises with the birth and becomes "polluted" with the I Am.

But, the supposed Absolute exists before and after the death of the body.

How do you or I know this?

Is this Absolute, existing not only before the I-Am and individuality, but also before the birth of the body itself, knowable in the waking state by direct experience, or are you only knowing that pure consciousness born at age zero?

Is the Absolute knowable in deep sleep as well, or is everything happening only in the waking state?

I certainly am not aware of any sort of existence when I am asleep, individual or absolute.

So, is the Absolute, the unmanifest, the noumena self-aware and I am aware of that Absolute awareness?

Or, is all of this just talk?

I have never heard any of the Advaita teachers talking about being aware of anything while in deep sleep, yet they talk about discovering the Absolute in the waking state. But does that discovery not die each night as we lose awake consciousness?

I do not know whether I have been clear expressing my perplexity. I have thought about this since I met _____

in 1997 and he was not very helpful--at least in clarifying for me.

Can you help me understand?

Pradeep's Reply:

My answers to your questions as they came:

Q As I take it, I-Am, the sense of presence, is added onto the pure consciousness that exists after birth until the age of three or so, whereupon the I concept and the network of thought begin to be added. Also, at that time, the network of thought becomes identified with the body sense.

A. The sense of presence or 'I am' "appears" after birth and remains dormant till the age of three or so and then, quite spontaneously, you come to know that 'you are' or 'I am', non-verbally of course. This continues till you learn words through languages you are taught and then develops the verbal 'I am' which completely obliterates the non-verbal one.

Q. But what about before the birth of the body? That pure consciousness arises with the birth and becomes "polluted" with the I Am.

A. Prior to birth the pure consciousness is all there is and it will remain so, it knows no birth or death, the 'I am' "appears" to rise on it

Q. But, the supposed Absolute exists before and after the death of the body.

A. Its consciousness everywhere you may call it the Absolute as that is all there ever is or was.

Q. How do you or I know this?

A. You cannot know it in the conventional sense as knower and knowing you can only become it. 'Become' is a loose word but in lieu of anything else I don't know what word to use.

Q. Is this Absolute, existing not only before the I-Am and individuality, but also before the birth of the body itself, knowable in the waking state by direct experience, or are you only knowing that pure consciousness born at age zero?

A. The direct experience is always there it has never left you; you have only to give up the 'I am the body' idea that's obstructing it.

Q. Is the Absolute knowable in deep sleep as well, or is everything happening only in the waking state?

A. The Absolute is beyond the three states and there are no happenings in it, all these "appear" to be so when you are still holding onto 'I am the body' idea which also gives the experience of the three states.

Q. I certainly am not aware of any sort of existence when I am asleep, individual or absolute.

A. You are not aware because there is no need for it and that's why deep sleep "appears" to be close to the Absolute, where too there are no requirements.

Q. So, is the Absolute, the unmanifest, the noumena self-aware and I am aware of that Absolute awareness?

A. You don't need to be aware of something you already are.

Q. Or, is all of this just talk?

A. It "appears" so.

Q. I have never heard any of the Advaita teachers talking about being aware of anything while in deep sleep, yet they talk about discovering the Absolute in the waking state. But does that discovery not die each night as we lose the 'awake' consciousness?

A. The Absolute can never be known in any of the states as they are all false. The Absolute is ever there, it will not appear or disappear intermittently but is continuous without break.

Q. I do not know whether I have been clear expressing my perplexity. I have thought about this since I met _____ in 1997 and he was not very helpful--at least in clarifying

for me.

A. Since all our interactions are based on individuals, the expression of ideas by each one of us are variable, some are conducive and understandable to us some not.

Q. Can you help me understand?

A. I hope my words help you understand.

Love

Pradeep

Pradeep,

Please, I am still confused.

Maharaj talks about the I AM sense arising about 3 years after the birth of the body. From birth to I Am there is pure sentience--which apparently is not the absolute.

Then, before that, there was just the unmanifest, or noumenal---is this correct?

But, we cannot know the noumenal essence directly. It cannot be an object. We cannot experience it--correct?

The play of consciousness then is the waxing and waning of the 3 states associated with biological sentience--correct?

But the unmanifest, that is our real nature?

How do we know that?

You say you are that, but what proof?

My perplexity is that there is no continuity of consciousness in the sleep state. If there is no continuity

even there, how can I know there is continuity of any sort of sentience before birth or after death?

Many, many years ago I became aware that the I thought referred to no I. There was no I, and the I concept was the source of existence of everything.

I also recognized then that consciousness itself was just a concept.

Later I realized--I "saw"-- that I was, but the waking state and the dream state were added onto me. I was not touched by either. They were like clouds passing through my sky.

Yet, I have not seen deep sleep arise or set in me.

Therefore, without the waking or dream state, I do not know I Am.

All the time I feel that all is arising and setting in me, but it is merely inference that when the biological mechanism dies, that still I Am.

Do you understand my dilemma?

I guess I am saying I do not understand Maharaj's philosophy applied to my experience.

Pradeep's Reply

Here we go again...

Q. Please, I am still confused.

A. That's a good sign indicating that you are desperately at it.

Q. Maharaj talks about the I AM sense arising about 3 years after the birth of the body. From birth to I Am there is pure sentience--which apparently is not the absolute.

A. Yes, it's not the absolute but it's not apart from it, you may call it just a clue, a pointer.

Q. Then, before that, there was just the unmanifest, or noumenal---is this correct?

A. The absolute always is, you project a unmanifest because you see and believe the manifest. If the unreality of the manifest is realized the unmanifest goes too and absolute prevails as it is.

Q. But, we cannot know the noumenal essence directly. It cannot be an object. We cannot experience it--correct?

A. As I said earlier you cannot know it in the conventional knower- knowing sense but you are ever in direct contact with it, yes it cannot be an experience.

Q. The play of consciousness then is the waxing and waning of the 3 states associated with biological sentience---correct?

A. It appears so

Q. But the unmanifest, that is out real nature?

A. Yes, it is the absolute, that you may call the unmanifest as opposed to the manifest.

Q. How do we know that?

A. 'I', 'we' or 'you' cannot know it as they are all false entities, how can false entities know the truth?

Q. You say you are that, but what proof?

A. Your very asking these questions, otherwise why would you bother to ask all this? It suggests that your movement to the state where no questions exist has begun, it's inevitable for all.

Q. My perplexity is that there is no continuity of consciousness in the sleep state. If there is no continuity even there, how can I know there is continuity of any sort of sentience before birth or after death

A. The very fact there is no continuity in the three states or birth and death strongly suggests that they are false, as the truth cannot be discontinuous. That's the reason you have to come back to the pure 'I am' - which is the only continuous link you have throughout your changing life - to come back to the permanent absolute on which it appears to have arisen retaining this (continuous) characteristic of the original.

Q. Many, many years ago I became aware that the I thought referred to no I. There was no I, and the I concept was the source of existence of everything.

A. The 'I-thought' in fact refers to an 'I', on investigating the source of the 'I-thought' you find that there is 'no I' and thus everything is rendered conceptual.

Q. I also recognized then that consciousness itself was just a concept.

A. Individual consciousness is a concept; pure consciousness is devoid of concepts

Q. Later I realized--I "saw"-- that I was, but the waking state and the dream state were added onto me. I was not touched by either. They were like clouds passing through my sky.

A. You 'saw' that 'you are' but didn't abide there long enough which is the 'sadhana' or practice so that waking, dream and sleep states are done away forever and irreversibly.

Q. Yet, I have not seen deep sleep arise or set in me.

A. That means you have not yet abided long enough in the pure 'I am'

Q. Therefore, without the waking or dream state, I do not know I Am.

A. In any of the three states you can only know yourself as an individual, if you are truly in the pure 'I am' without adjuncts these three would appear dreamlike. To put it in a different way I quote Bhagwan Ramana: "A jnani's is the ever-waking state, because he is awake to the eternal Self, his is the ever-dreaming state, because to him the world is no better than a repeatedly presented phenomenon of dream, his is the ever-sleeping state, because he is at all times without the 'I am the body' consciousness"

Q. All the time I feel that all is arising and setting in me, but it is merely inference that when the biological mechanism dies, that still I Am.

A. Yes, it is an inference because you have identified yourself as the biological mechanism that is born and dies.

Q. Do you understand my dilemma?

A. Persist with the dilemma, its bound to be there because of the strong knot between the consciousness and the body evident as the 'I am the body' idea. Your persistence would help breaking the knot

Q. I guess I am saying I do not understand Maharaj's philosophy applied to my experience.

A. Yes definitely, if applied as 'my' experience you'd never understand either Maharaj or Bhagwan Ramana. Individuality has to be given up to understand these great masters.

Pradeep

PS if you could manage to open the book 'The Path of Sri Ramana – part one' on pages 145 to 147 there is good example described that enables us to improve our understanding. The book should be available on-line if you search.

Thank you very much Pradeep
Your words caused some breaking in me.
For months now I have been happier and happier, in
complete relaxation and rest except for this question.
Thank you again.
By the way, where do you live?

Pradeep's reply

*I look forward to the day when all questions just
disappear for you and all.*

*I live in a small town called Indore in the state of Madhya
Pradesh which comes in central India and I am a Clinical
Biochemist by profession.*

Love

Pradeep

Thank you very much.
I live in gratitude for your kindness to answer.
Your answers hit home and tell me I am on the right track.
Your Nisargadatta Gita is the greatest text on practice I
have yet read.
Thank you.

Pradeep,

Thank you a million times over.

I got it.

I was reading the Nisargadatta Gita, #103.

I am That who is aware of the coming and going of I Am,
of consciousness.

I am even before this knowledge.

I have no attributes, I am before and beyond all attributes, knowing and not knowing.

I am and the world are little things compared to me.

With this came great peace. I felt great happiness.

Thank you. I must dwell here until this becomes my primary identification

I assume that means staying in this much as possible?

What got me out before is failing to attend and getting distracted by activities.

Thank you so much.

With Great Love,

Pradeep's reply

Yes, to the extent that whatever activities may go on you are ever there naturally.

Pradeep,

Please, I do not want to pester you, and impose on you, but...I am not certain this is the case now as anything I say or write is far from reality, but it appears: The difference between phenomenality and noumenality is conceptual. In fact they are the same. There is something going on in the Noumenal which eventuates in the creation of sentience, which I guess you could call I Am, but not exactly. This sentience casts a "light" on the vastness, Unborn, hitherto unwitnessed Absolute, which "reveals" forms in the hitherto formless. The forms and formless are not two. I am

both born and unborn, although the born is transient and I, as that beyond the born, always prevail. I, who apprehend my true nature directly, am also that which perceives myself through sentience. That which arises in me cannot be different from me, cannot be separate and alien. The very interesting thing is that this understanding destroys the difference between idealism and realism, such as between Kant and Locke. Is this my latest mistake? I will not pester you anymore.

In Gratitude, I wish I could meet you some day.

Pradeep's reply

you have used the words "it appears" in the very beginning of your query, that's enough to suggest that your understanding is correct, all this just "appears to be so". Sadhana or practice is the key that will make this conviction firm and permanent or irreversible, then all traces of duality wouldn't exist and you'd know "all this never came to be in the first place!". In fact, somewhere, deep down quite unknowingly the idea 'I am the body' still lingers that acts as an obstacle and creates all doubts and questions. The destruction of this idea is absolutely essential for any breakthrough to occur, which is the only reason for the sadhana.

Love

Pradeep

2.

Dear Sir

I am highly impressed by your compilations of Shri Nisargadata Maharaj's works. Tremendously penetrating and revealing.

I am desparate to meet you in person in Indore and convey my gratitude and regards.

best regards,

Pradeep's reply

You are most welcome to meet me on my local Indore address, which is my workplace as well. I usually see visitors between 7.30 am and 9.30 am, then I get busy in my work. Meanwhile if you have any specific queries you may contact me through mail.

Love

Pradeep

*Local address: Medicare Centre, 4/5 Old Palasia,
Ravindra Nagar, Indore 452018(MP)
India.*

Dear Sir,

If what is verbalized as "I am", is "sense of presence", fear of extinction (of sense of presence) is it not natural?

Further, to strengthen (give more substantivity) the idea of "I am" (sense of presence) one tends to hold on to various concepts/ideas/body/mind/God/religion/social customs/beli

-efs etc., although it may a futile exercise. What else this helpless entity/organism do?
Will you pl. clarify? With lots of love.

Pradeep's reply

What is the 'I am' before any verbalization? That pure 'I am' without any words or adjuncts has to be understood. It's quite subtle but can be caught just before falling asleep or just when you wake up in the morning. If that is difficult, and it is, I would suggest using your memory and going back to recollect when for the first time you came know that 'you are'. It is usually around the age of three or so, you did not know any words or language but simple knew your 'presence' or 'being' as it is in its absolute purity. I call this the nascent 'I am' and this is non-verbal and there is no fear of extinction at all in it. Now what you call the strengthening of the 'I am' is a consequence of adjuncts that follow once you have verbalized the 'I am' through identification with name and form.

By identifying the feeling 'I am' with name and form followed by its strengthening by adjuncts you have wandered away from the original pure nascent 'I am'. Thus, understanding the 'I am' is absolutely important only then your abidance in it would have any value. I am quoting a beautiful excerpt from 'The Path of Ramana – part one' that may help:

"The feeling 'I am' is the experience common to one and all. In this, 'am' is consciousness or knowledge. This knowledge is not anything external; it is the knowledge of oneself. This is 'chit'; this consciousness is 'we'. This is

our 'being' (that is our true existence) or 'sat'. This is called 'that which is'. Thus in 'I am', 'I' is existence (sat) and 'am' is consciousness (chit). When Self, our nature of existence-consciousness (sat-chit swarupam), instead of shining only as the pure consciousness 'I am' shines mixed with an adjunct (upadhi) as 'I am a man', 'I am so-and-so', then this mixed consciousness is the ego. This mixed consciousness can rise only by catching hold of a form and name. When we think 'I am so-and-so', 'I am sitting', 'I am lying', is it not clear that we have mistaken the body for 'I'(existence), and that we have assumed its name and postures as 'I am this and I am thus'? – The feeling 'this and thus' which has now arisen mixed with the pure consciousness 'I am' (sat-chit) is what is called 'thought', This is the first thought. The pure existence-consciousness, 'I am', is not a thought; it is the very nature of our 'being' (swarupam). The mixed consciousness 'I am this, or that' is a thought that arises from our 'being'. It is only after the rising of this thought, the mixed consciousness (the first person), that all other thoughts, which are the knowledge of second and third person, come to be."

Love

Pradeep

Dear Sir

"I am" viz., "presence" or "being" or "existence-consciousness" before verbalisation-is it not a state of "not-knowing"(not -knowing meaning conventional dualistic way of knowing).The very "pure I am" is it not like "space"

without anything? Just " TO BE PURE 'I AM' " no verbalization of any kind is needed. However to express that state of "pure Being" verbalization, that is bringing up of a notional subject/entity (may be called ego or self-consciousness pseudo I) in "Consciousness" becomes inevitable. Same is the case for all transactions that we need to do in the world.

With immense gratitude & lots of Love,

Pradeep's reply

You are right in that, but imparting reality to it is the folly. It is unreal like the dream which along with waking and deep sleep states appear to rise on the pure 'I am' or 'existence-consciousness'. Thus the thought 'I am the body' is ignorance, but that it is not apart from the Self is knowledge. We have been conditioned so strongly that we find it difficult to write off all this as unreal That is why Sadhana is needed and Sadhana means 'Being' not 'Doing'. Being what? Just as 'your are', and you don't have to 'do' anything to be as 'you are', the Self, the true eternal state which is ever there.

Dear Sir,

Formless(dimensionless) Reality expressing/manifesting Itself in and through various forms before cognition (separating, naming, identifying and knowing) of which is being referred as nascent "I am". Is the understanding correct sir?

With love and regards.

Pradeep's reply

Well _____, that much understanding is enough – which is, you at least principally accept the 'I am' as the basic element. 'You are' therefore you could write to me, 'I am' therefore I could reply back, 'we are' therefore all this communication could be possible.

This principle 'I am' or 'being' is common to one and all, to every object that you can think of, right from the smallest atom to the mountain. Its expression would however vary according to the five elemental and three quality compositions, our composition permits us to say 'I am' while that of a rock doesn't.

Now comes the next, you have to ever abide in this 'I am' and see for yourself what happens... do not depend on books or others... you must directly know it on your own, let the 'I am' be your guide, god or guru.

Dear Sir,

From your explanation it appears as though, "Existence Consciousness" is divided in many forms; while some forms like mountain etc., are not aware of their existence. I feel such division is not real and is mind made (conceptual). Existence is undivided Whole. Will you kindly clarify with love,

Pradeep's reply

You have used the words "appears as though" - that's it! It only appears as though divided and it is conceptual and not real but to realize this actually you have to abide in the

your pure 'being' or 'I am' , only then would the undivided whole descend on you and 'you' wouldn't be there anymore! If you have understood the 'I am', which I feel you have, go ahead with the Sadhana of dwelling in the 'I am' and see what happens - just do it.

Dear Sir,

Understood, clearly understood. Undeniable TRUTH-fact of Existence, beyond all forms, attributes, concepts, mind made self (out of forms, attribute and concepts) - Common denominator/substratum behind all forms/appearances.

many, many Thanks,

With love,

3.

Dear Pradeep Apte,

Namaste,

Please accept my thanks for all the informations that you have offered on your blog, and the work you have done to help the disciple.

I have read I Am That, and a few other books of Sri Nisargadatta and one of Sri Siddharameswar. Many of Sri Ramana and been doing sadhana of Self-Enquiry, vichara for a little while.

I will particularly study The Nisargadatta Gita.

Namaste

Pradeep's reply

Namaskar

If you have any specific questions on the 'I am' or self-enquiry please feel free to contact me through e-mail. I honestly wish you all the best on your way to Self discovery.

Love

Pradeep

Namaskar Pradeep,

I printed The Nisargadatta Gita yesterday and started to read it. It is wonderful to read and very motivating. Each quote increases the I Am.

I've been struggling with the need of a Living guru, as you did, for the last couple of years. This thought was always on the mind, even if I recognized that it was the ego that was keeping me outward. I still would like to have a Jnani to clear the occasional doubt that surges. Not on the teaching, but on being successful with vichara. Which is another way the ego works!

I have no doubt about the teaching per se. Only this fear, that I will not make it before this body dies. I guess this is common to sadhakas.

Many Jnani retired to meditate on the Self. Sri Nisargadatta also went in meditation as often as he could. Sri Ramana did say that to do vichara, one does not have to sit at certain hour to meditate, but keep the attention on the Self at all times. Is your understanding that one should isolate himself, or just stay with the feeling of I Am.

Love,

Pradeep's reply

If you abide in the 'I am' without words or just purely the 'I am' without adjuncts that is isolation itself. Physically isolating yourself maybe useful in the beginning but is not necessary, understanding the 'I am' and then abiding in it is more important.

Namaskar,

Could you explain why the emphasis on **understanding the 'I am'** and elaborate more?

Pradeep's reply

Because understanding the 'I am' makes your abidance more effective. In 'I am' the 'I' stands for 'being' or 'existence' while the 'am' stands for 'consciousness' so 'I am' means 'being-consciousness'. If that is clear then nothing else is needed, then your abidance would be 'bliss'.

Namaskar,

Forgive me for bothering you again, but it is not that clear for me.

What I understand is that when I turn within, putting the attention on the feeling 'I am', the attention on my own present awareness, not thinking, not trying to "do" anything, but just stay put, being in that feeling. Being aware of being aware. This is the ego's I am, which will dissolve, disappears.

To be aware, conscious of I am...means there has to be a "knower", a witness. This witness is beyond the 'I am', of being. This is the Absolute.

What I am not sure of comprehending correctly is your 'being-consciousness'. Is my description above correct? Or are you hinting at something more subtle?

I would also like your comments on the fact that although the teaching is very simple, why are there only the rarest of the rarest that Self-realize? That so few have succeeded?

Pradeep's reply

'Being', 'consciousness' and 'I am' are all the same it's only a question of what suits you most. You are right in trying not to 'do' anything as sadhana or practice is not 'doing' but 'being', 'just being' that's all. I am not hinting anything subtler but just suggesting to 'just be'. You can even say be still, do not give attention to this, do not give attention to that, do not give attention to anything, you'll by the power of your attention on 'being' become the reality. In fact the word 'become' is not appropriate as you already are the reality, you can say you come home or reality engulfs you, it's difficult to give exact words. You know 'you are' for sure so 'just be' that's enough. There are two main reasons why very few realize: Firstly, to do away with the 'I am the body' idea is something almost next to impossible and secondly there is a lot of talk about the sadhana but very few actually do it with earnestness. My sole reason for writing 'The Nisargadatta Gita' was to inspire the latter with the hope that the former would come about in the process.

OK! Thank you! It's perfectly clear now.
As for the Nisargadatta Gita, speaking for myself, it is a fantastic help in that endeavour.
Thanks for your time,
Namaskar

Namaskar,
Other questions if I may. Sri Ramana said that vichara should be done with the eyes open. He also said that vichara should be done all the time in all activities, and not to sit down at fixed hour to meditate.
Staying, abiding in I Am, all through the day without wavering is an enormous task. It rather comes easily now, that when I'll realize that I am outward I will return to I am. But it is very difficult to stay put for a long period of time. Like Sri Nisargadatta said, it's a slippery place!
Any suggestions, tips on these points?

Pradeep's reply

Devise what suits you best according to your vocation. Setting aside fixed times is useful, especially early morning hours. Do not worry if at times you are unable to have a good abidance in the 'I am' but you must persist with it. Slip-fall-abide-slip-fall-abide, if it is so let it be so. You are your own master so you have to develop your own tips that fit the pattern of your day. I can suggest a book by Michael Langford that is loaded with tips and is available as an e-book at:

http://www.albigen.com/uarelove/most_rapid/contents.asp

x

Since you had mentioned an awareness watching awareness in one of your previous mails this one may come handy. If you have already read it, fine.

Love

Pradeep

Namaskar

I have read almost all of the books on Sri Nisargadatta, including yours, The Nisargadatta Gita, I Am Unborn and even the complete I Am quote. But I haven't found anyone in any of the books asking the following question. Reading the prologue you wrote in The Nisargadatta Gita for the second time, where you describe your experience on "I Am" and "I Am not" prompt me to ask you my question.

I am surprised though that no one ever asked this. The consciousness in the food body, is the I Amness, the Beingness. Absolute awareness is beyond. Abiding in I Am, eventually it merges in the Absolute and only Reality remains. At the "death" of the body, consciousness, the I Am "dissolves" in the Impersonal Awareness.

Sri Nisargadatta said it is Awareness **unaware** of Itself. He would also describe it as what one was 100 years before, or before "birth" etc...

Or as you wrote, from the state of I Am to I Am Not. I find it astounding that on hearing that consciousness leaves with the "death" of the body and one becomes unaware...and not enquire on this unawareness.

Isn't awareness unaware of Itself a total void, a total absence of Being, existing, what you called "I Am Not"? Can you use words to describe what this I Am Not "state" is?

Pradeep's reply

No there are no words to describe the 'I am not' state, I only say 'I am not' as opposed to saying when 'I am', these were alternating states when only the non-verbal 'I am' was around. Once the 'I am' becomes verbal you have the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. Then, consciousness never 'leaves' the body, at death, the elemental + quality composition of the body is no more capable of expressing it the way as it did it earlier, moreover it is the body that 'appears' on consciousness and not the other way around. The consciousness is ever there except that it is devoid of content and hence we call it pure awareness unaware of itself. Why so? Because it doesn't require to be aware of itself, and who is to be aware of whom?

You have to imagine a state where everything is made up of a single substance. OR say you imagine the whole world made up of only a single type of atom or molecule. OR say you imagine a photograph where every pixel is identical in every way. In such cases will there be any differentiation anymore? Quite similarly if it is the 'I am' everywhere which 'I am' are you talking of? It is just a limitation of words so we use words like 'turiyatita' or 'disappear', you can even say 'individuality is lost' and so forth in whatever way you understand. The above

examples may prove helpful. Then, there is even the classical example of 'the salt doll that went to taste the sea water and became the sea!'

Words are indeed difficult to express this state, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj did it in whatever best words he could find in 'Marathi' his native language and translators used whatever best words their vocabulary permitted. It is the 'sadhana' part that is of utmost importance, which if not undertaken, renders everything as an exercise in futility. Do what Maharaj says and then see what is your own direct experience rather than relying on me or anybody or any text to give you insights.

Love

Pradeep

4.

Dear Shri Apte,

I got your email from a colleague of mine and also read your nisarga gita. I read I am that, a few years ago. I am at a stage where I am struggling to put this into action. I am not sure if and how you can help, as I looked for some biography of yours, and did not find one, anywhere....not even a website....which is really good, and that is a litmus test, for me, to want to seek a conversation... Till date, I have not approached, followed any specific guru or group or discussed the path in a group or satsang... I have read

and passed thru most of the books you pointed, except for a few...and not sure by how much behind but tracing a similar path, as yours....Something tells me to write this mail
thanks for taking the time to read it..

Pradeep's reply

Thank you very much for your mail.

Understanding the 'I am', your sense of 'being' or the feeling that 'you are' is the most crucial and only decisive event. For this you may either read the complete 'I am' quotes or the 'Nisargadatta Gita'.If you have understood correctly, then you don't require anything else - guru, discussions or satsanga. If you have any specific questions pertaining to the 'I am' you may feel free to ask
Love

Pradeep

Dear Shri Apte,

Thanks for your prompt reply.

Really finding it hard where to start, but I will.

1. Is not watching breath, anapanasati proposed by Buddha, achieving the same thing without having to use the mind to create "concept" of I AM and then figuring out the same without it?
2. Saadhana vs Praptha... There seems to be a linear/progression and steps involved with a clear demarcation as you go along in this method. Where the letting go happens?
3. Given the background of Maharaj and how it all happened..where he was fully trusting his guru and had no

baggage whatsoever of past/learning/knowledge, and the way Maharaj says it happened..one can relate and believe it....95% praptha...and 5% or less saadhana...where he was fully dedicated. How do people with so much knowledge, success, science background, distrust and questioning prove it to me attitude ever benefit from this yet simple way?

4. Most of the first 100 to 150 verses are telling how it is about the parabrahman, the absolute, the delusion, the confusion and where to get....I read them....I may understand them too...I may believe them too....but how and when do we know it....does all this information about the "supreme" a spoiler like watching a trailer or reading a novel before the movie...more setting expectation and 'screwing" it up for the likes of us...whereas for Buddha and Maharaj...it was pure, self driven and they read no books.....This is paradoxical.
thanks

Pradeep's reply

1. All meditative practices, japa, mantra and the rest indicate the 'I am' and are used to get stabilized init, suit yourself.

2. The letting go happens when the nickel drops and you realize the futility of sadhana as the so-called 'person' was illusory or false, so whereof sadhana and for whom? And the praptha is ever there, is and would ever be.

Understanding and earnestness are important.

3. The more you have wandered away from the 'I am' the more it has strengthened your individuality and placed

you in a conceptual jungle, this is of the 'people' you mention. You have to revert and come back to the root - the 'I am' that began all this, the simplicity of the teaching is difficult to swallow.

4. May it be Buddha or Maharaj or anybody all are placed and evolve along a unique set of circumstances, but the 'I am' is common to all regardless of anything. Another common thing among all seekers is this unknown 'self drive'(it has brought you thus far to ask all these questions to someone you don't know and have never met, yet you are prepared to take your chances). The intensity of the drive is very important.

Use my books the complete 'I am' quotes or the Nisargadatta gita only as a device to get focused on the 'I am', once you have understood the 'I am' and are stabilized in it you may as well throw them away. You have spoken of a litmus test in your previous mail, well I offer you one for yourself:

If you have any questions still bugging you, lest assured you are NOT in the 'I am', as there can be no questions when you are stabilized in the 'I am', it being PRIOR to all questions, so how can there be any questions there? And what is PRIOR to the 'I am'? I believe you can guess it correctly.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Shri Apte,

While it is so easy to ask questions, I feel it is your magnanimity and compassion to take the "chances" and the

time to reply and provide answers, to someone, unknown, like me. I have been listening to tapes of Osho from early on. I listened to the Dhammapada series in 2003 by Osho, which made me decide to come back to India and help see the futility of materialistic pursuit. Upon arrival, I listened over 200+ hours of discourse on tape on entire Gita by Osho, which provided again, quite an amount of details on many aspects, covered in Gita, the three gunas, paths, etc.

I also read quite a bit, including Ramana Maharishi, Jiddu, UGK (a bit), Swami Rama, lot of zen and Power of Now by ET really helped in many ways...and finally laid my hands on I am That. It struck me as this is the only one I need, but did not really know how to really use it...and my mind has been trying to figure it out, until now...

I have realized the "destiny" works its own way and have learnt to take what it gives me. I have learnt it knows more than me, when to send books, people, pointers, website my way. All the difference is, that I do not postpone...I react immediately, without losing any time, but without hoping that something will happen...

Destiny is wonderful....It always comes packaged such that...one way it looks very normal and ordinary...and other way it looks "just made for me at the very right moment not a day early or late"a total miracle....a miracle for me...a pure coincidence from other's perspective.....pretty neat trick...by God, to hide and keep his existence a total, total mystery.

It is a journey. I feel someone/thing knows where I am headed. I have learnt to trust that driver. learnt to put my ears on alert and get a bit more deeper into listening to stray

new discussions...which is why I focused intently when I heard _____ talk about it...I mentioned to him about I am that, and Shankara and upon searching Shankara, he found out about you and forwarded some links.

I took it as a sign and followed up, only hoping that you would mail me back.

I seek your guidance

Pradeep's reply

Take the 'I am' as your destiny because your destiny is not death but the disappearance of 'I am'.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Shri Apte,

One more, but last question for now, and I will embark upon your book and saadhana. What about vasanas, and what happens to them, in the process of sadhana...and stabilizing.....this is with regards to, food, work, hobbies, comforts, achievements, possessions and relationships...and need to control anger, growing compassion, exhibiting love, equanimity.....all the ambitions to be a good man/citizen or an achiever, possessor....how does that relationship change?

thanks

Pradeep's reply

Once you understand and stabilize in the 'I am' all the vasanas can be very clearly visualized as post-I am modifications or 'add-ons' that grew along the way depending on circumstances. The 'I am' too is a vasana,

the first and the last, to be ultimately done away with. The 'I am' meditates on the 'I am' to annihilate the 'I am'. It's quite similar to a whirlpool where you have to go down to the tip or origin of the whirlpool where the current is less and then you can easily swim out.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Shri Apte,

During the transition, from the realization that there are vasanas and where we prefer to "let go"and go after the "I am", as I read yesterday, in Nisarga Gita, about thought wandering and person himself wandering away, (sanyas).....My direct question is, is there a need to reduce, let go, deprive.... As this is contrary and is what makes relationships and progress very hard, while living in Samsara.

I will ask a very direct question:

I enjoy good food, very successful at work, built a home, indulge in luxury, involve quite a bit in the work of creating a landscape/garden etc....and in parallel and i am as much involved or engrossed in this seeking...now I am not even sure why...but that is the only thing on my mind....but of course not the "saadhana" or doing part of forcing to be in the I am....it is like "thirst" in the back of my mind...reminding I need water...My pursuits, discussion, etc though just with my family....am caught up to see this duality of enjoying pleasures...and talking about this pursuit.....It is hypocritical, etc....I know it is not...I have seen how Janaka has handled it and read Ashtavakra....and

have understood quite a bit that, before pursuit, all this is a game...leela....Still there is a nagging feeling of then how are we different....

From the Rolls Royces that Osho had, to many other Gurus...I was even told and asked, that Maharaj continued to smoke Beedis after his attainment....One way to look at it....is I am not the body, it is a bodily need...etc..another way to say is are we just hiding behind this excuse and having a high and mighty attitude about the seeking....I have answers....or I can choose not to indulge....I can give up convincing and just take the leap...but like Buddha said...do not take anything for granted...ask....question...and be convinced....So, this one question/confusion...the answer to it is NOT coming from within....It is borrowed and an excuse...so I am torn.....and that is why I cannot decide to take the leap....not because I want to continue enjoying pleasures....I was a vegetarian...and rebelled and became a meat eater at 18....I loved meat so much.....I ate only meat...when I came back to India....I told you about the pursuit..etc.and also due to health reasons...reaching forty years...high bp, cholesterol....I decided to give up red meat....I did not touch 1 morsel for over two years+ and I got freedom from it...it was not deprivation....I gladly gave it up...and nothing can tempt me....to eat it....until this new year...I had eaten 1 plate during a new year party....I am not sure....let go...eat....is this hypocrisy...show off....just will power....trying to imitate others...I am sure I am not depriving my self....I am being neutral....

So, the seeking or pursuit...for me is not a running away from samsara....a defeat retreat....I feel I am extremely successful and happy....and seeing my interest in people,

material pursuits, titles, jobs, accumulation of wealth, discussions, are coming down quite drastically...as I see the farceness and temporal nature....I do have still interest to do things....build...create....Is there a identifiable switch...can it happen right in the middle of family...(I have a good wife, two kids, a dog and parents and in-laws...and we have a very normal happy life!)

Pradeep's reply
Just give a fair trial to understanding and abiding in the 'I am' and everything else will settle down, either way, being unreal it's not of much value. Just forget everything and settle down in the 'I am'.

Dear Shri Apte,
I will do as suggested.
thanks.

5.

Sir,
Namskar,
Some things I would like to share and seek advice:
Who is the witness / experiencer in the dream? In dream all (people, places, experiences) are created and experienced on its own by some force.If it is the same in both dream and

awakened state that means all what is seen, listened, touched in awakened state is created and experienced by the same force and nothing really exists.

Regards and Wishes

Pradeep's reply

It is through the 'I am' that witnessing occurs, the 'I am' without words is the 'Turiya' or the fourth state on which all the three: waking, dream and deep sleep states occur. Witnessing would always have some content, the 'I am' being the first and the last content, when even the 'I am' disappears there is no content anymore, then it is Awareness. That nothing really exists or ever came to be would be a realization to the 'Turiyatita' - the one beyond the fourth. It is one single movement with no individual involved anywhere, quite suddenly it drops there was no 'someone' all along! Only the formless, unborn 'Parabrahman' or Absolute ever is, was and would be.

love

Pradeep

Sir,

I do not want to understand myself so I am asking and disturbing you again, but this is crucial; You said it is "through" I Am that witness occurs but to whom does it occur and who creates whatever occurs. Is it that I am creates and projects on to itself.

Pradeep's reply

Witnessing is happening to 'You' as the True Absolute or Parabrahman. The 'I am' has only appeared on 'You' and would disappear. Don't be concerned with what you are witnessing but 'Who' is witnessing - you are That!

Love

Pradeep

Sir,

At the outset thanks for your direct and crisp coaching, my questions Are getting less and less. One question while I was reading "Ultimate medicine" came to my mind. Maharaj says that what happens between deep sleep and awake state is very important. Please guide what happens to consciousness in the deep sleep state.

I"ABSOLUTE" am not aware that I AM but periodically in the morning again I know I AM but after so called Death of this body I permanently do not know I AM. Please help what is different in two states - Deep Sleep and what we call as death.

Regards and Wishes

Pradeep's reply

In deep sleep the 'I am' is only held in abeyance it does not disappear, for if your name is called loudly you instantly wake up and respond. Similarly when you are unconscious through injury or a stroke or something, the 'I am' is there lurking in the background but incapable of expression as the medium (body)is not capable of doing so, proper conditions prevailing(of the body) the 'I am' emerge sin full swing. Death is a total and permanent

disappearance of the 'I am' as the body has been rendered completely unfit for its expression any more. In fact this very appearance (birth) and disappearance (death) of the 'I am' and its dependence on the body disqualifies it as the The Reality for how can anything transitory and dependant be real or The Truth!

Pradeep

Sir,

Thanks for the reply. Excuse me for sounding the way I might sound to an expert like you but

1 Abeyance means ???

2.The condition of the body (it does seem so at least medically speaking, because people die very young too) is not the universal reason for so called death, then what makes I AM leave the body temporally (every deep sleep) or permanently (as at so called death)

Regards and Wishes

Pradeep's reply

1. Abeyance means temporarily suspended, it happens quite spontaneously by falling asleep or even during the day or if you are engrossed in something.

2. When I said condition it does not mean young or old, it means any physiological aberration whatever may have been its means of induction that caused you to be unconscious. You have to understand all this at a very broader level rather than just restricting yourself to human conditions. The universal consciousness or the 'I

am' is everywhere, its expressions vary according to the five elemental and three quality composition of the object, like in a stone the composition does not permit its expression as extensively as it does in humans, but it is very much there.

Ultimately you have to realize that you are not this consciousness either to quote Maharaj: "You are always the Supreme which appears at a given point of time and space as the witness, a bridge between the pure awareness of the Supreme and the manifold consciousness of the person "I feel that the answers to most of your questions would be found in the book I AM THAT, read it carefully with rapt attention, if already read, re-read it, for each reading of this magical text is a revelation.

Understand the 'I am' and abide in it, then there wouldn't be any questions, if questions still arise or exist take it as a sure sign that you are not abiding in the 'I am' because all questions are post-'I am' add-ons or come much later.

Love

Pradeep

Sir,

Thanks for the valuable advice. I shall do as advised.

Regards and Wishes

6.

Pradeep

Isn't it so that what I am, the Absolute is beyond even awareness??!!
There is no experience of this is there.

Pradeep's reply

There can be NO experience, the illusory trinity stands exposed and hence dissolves, in Reality no experience is required!

Pradeep

haahahahaahahahahhahahahahahahahahahahahhahahahaah
ahahhaah

no waaaaaaaaay!

so simple

7.

Dear Pradeep,

I recently came across the Nisargadatta Gita of yours and I have been reading it quite carefully. I must say that since reading quite a few books on Nisargadatta Maharaj it is

really wonderful and helpful to read your work since it helps to really understand the teaching of Maharaj and make it clearer. I personally appreciate the time and effort you have put on the Nisargadatta Gita which helps me understanding Maharaj's teaching correctly. I will really appreciate your help to understand one thing which to me is the main crux without which none of the teachings can be understood or followed by me. My question is on the Non verbal I Am. What exactly is this Non verbal I Am and how do I recognize it. I have been practicing Ramana Maharishi's "Who am I" meditation which is part of the meditation method I follow. I have been doing it like this. I sit and close my eyes and ask myself "Who am I" followed by a space then again "Who am I". Since I read that there is really no answer to the question I thought I was doing it correctly.

A few days back, I just decided to change the way I was doing it. Only if a thought comes up do I ask myself "Who is having this thought?" to which I reply "I am" then I ask "Who is this I". I then noticed a strange thing. The thought disappears along with the question. I then did this till I reached a point where I was asking "Who is asking- Who is this I". I then reached a point where there were no questions but just the "I". I think this is what is meant by the non-verbal "I Am" because it feels like the verbal "I Am" was the thoughts or words asking who am I etc. When that stopped what was left was just the sense of "I".

Have I understood this correctly? Is this the right understanding of the Non Verbal I Am? I will really appreciate your feedback because it wouldn't make any

sense to try to be with the I Am if it is the wrong interpretation of I Am.

Thanks and Regards,

Pradeep's reply:

Thank you for your mail. Whatever way you may do it, it ultimately burns down to getting stabilized in the 'I am'. The whole sadhana or practice is about the 'I am' watching the 'I am' or the awareness watching the awareness or the consciousness watching the consciousness. This feeling of being or awareness or the 'I am' is not something far off but your day-to-day awareness which is there in the background throughout the day. Now, in this process of the 'I am' watching the 'I am' if a thought comes you wade it away – say, sorry 'I am' watching that 'I am', maybe later. Remember that the awareness, which even right now is enabling you to read this mail, is not a thought it is the same as the non-verbal 'I am'. I have devised a small book which you can download from:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/9656212/I-Am-the-Ma-Ha-Mantra-of-Sri-Nisargadatta-Maharaj>

or

<http://www.lulu.com/content/5703590>

You may find it useful. You are on the right track, please do continue.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep,

Thank you for your prompt response and as suggested I have printed the Maha Mantra and have started reading it every day (at least twice in a day). I have a question which I request your clarification. During sitting meditation I am watching the I am is quite easy. But during the day when I go about I try to be with the I am. That is Awareness watching Awareness. I notice that sometimes the Awareness moves to the eyes as the function of seeing and other times the awareness or the feeling of I am seems to be in my chest. I am a little confused. Do I shift from the eyes (actually more precisely in the head and face including the eyes) to the chest where the feeling is located?

I really appreciate your guidance. I am one of those people who was born in 1969 so I missed out on Ramana Maharishi (I was not even born then) and Nisargadatta Maharaj (I was 12 years old in 1981). All I can connect with are the books for guidance on their teachings.

Thanks and Regards,

Pradeep's reply

Be clear on the fact that the 'I am' or awareness has no physical location. If at all you feel it so, it is the mind that is interfering or projecting. A direct jump for attending to the 'I am' or awareness at work may not be easy. Initially you'd have to devote separate timings kept aside only for your spiritual practice. If you succeed there in remaining in the 'I am' throughout your session with no thought interference, only then you stand a

chance of reverting to it while doing your day to day interactions. If you have to earn a living and interact in society you'd have to use the mind anyway but you will do this with your roots firmly established in the awareness. When you act from the awareness as your base you can do no wrong - ever, nor carry any karmic residue.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep,

Thank you so much for bringing clarity to the understanding (as well as dismissing my misunderstanding) of I Am. Knowing what you have explained has brought the whole aspect very much to a firmer understanding. I must admit that I read a lot, both through books as well as the internet- including blogs and discussion groups, and I think my misunderstanding must have been rooted in someone else's description and the mind must have latched on to it.

I am a 39 year old with a family (wife, daughter and my mother) so I have to work. The time I spend in pure meditations on week days are only a few hours. But this aspect is always in my mind most of the day.

I am grateful for your advise and guidance and I hope I am not bothering you with these questions and doubts of mine. Once again, Thank you.

Love and Regards,

Pradeep's reply

I am always open to genuine seekers, continue your sadhana silently while attending to your family with all love and understanding.

Pradeep

8.

Pradeep,

I am studying Nisargadatta and some Western realizers who are his devotees. The western teachers have a difficulty with the idea of God and devotion to him, because they think this implies a position of duality. But, there are certainly many Advaita masters who speak about God and devotion to God. My heart tells me this is an important part of my practice and my inner self is pointing me in this direction also. I am in an awakened place at this point. Sorry if I use the words that I know, yet they do not explain what is happening and where I am. I am here in the ever shining presence and the I has slipped away. The world and my person has been rejected.

At this point many mystical experiences are occurring.

I know Maharaj

said when he focused on the direction that He was the Universal Reality as Shree Siddharameshwar Maharaj directed him to do the mystical experiences fell away and then realization happened. He was so devoted to his

guru and that I comprehend, yet he also refers to his devotion to God (Atman and Brahman), as does his Guru and Shri Ranjit Maharaj.

So, can you help me understand the nature of this devotion and if it does set up the quandary of duality, as some Western teachers of Advaita teach. I have a deep sense of devotion for the Sadguru and for God. This devotion has always been with me and my heart will not surrender it, because it comes from the source of awareness within me. Again, excuse the language. I use what seems appropriate as far as language can express it. The I's and me's have no substance anymore. So excuse them. They have their own world of illusory existence where they serve their purpose. The real question I have more expressly put is this. Is devotion part of Maya, or is it an important part of the Universal Reality. What is the value of this extension of God having devotion to God. I believe I know, but I want to hear it from an Indian Devotee of Maharaj.

With respect and gratefulness,

Pradeep's reply

I can understand this dilemma that you are facing, that's because devotion is always understood as towards 'something' and brings in the subject object relationship or duality as we call it. But this problem is immediately resolved once you have understood the 'I am' or the background awareness very clearly or beyond doubt. The very 'sadhana' or practice prescribed by Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj to Sri

Nisargadatta Maharaj was that of the 'I am' watching the 'I am' or the awareness watching the awareness, and this is what Sri Nisargadatta propagated throughout his teachings in the best possible ways he could. And this 'I am' or awareness is not something far off or distant, but it is your plain simple day to day awareness, which appears immediately when wake up or when it first appeared on you around the age of three or so. This is the Jnana (Knowledge) Marga (Path), which many may not find conducive or easy to comprehend so for them we have the Bhakti(Devotion) Marga(path) which is predominant in India where devotion to a particular Godhead is prescribed. In this devotional path, at its climax, the devotee and the devoted merge or unite. Either way, by Jnana or Bhakti, the result is the same – all individuality is lost and non-duality prevails as the Ultimate Reality or Parabrahman. The one following Jnana is bound to develop devotion or bhakti and vice-versa, the one following devotion or bhakti is certain to develop Jnana, provided their approach has been correct and honest. Finally both Jnana or devotion come under Maya, because if you already know what you are you are no longer in Maya, then which Jnana or which bhakti do you need? The answers given by all these masters largely depend on as to whom were they given and in what context? An Indian, westerner, bhakta, sadhaka or politician etc. If this fact is not borne in mind many of their statements may appear to be contradictory. They always replied according to the

quality and grading of spiritual understanding the questioner had. But these are all intellectual understandings which may have some value in the beginning but once settled they are quite useless. It is the intensity of your longing for freedom and the earnestness of your sadhana that will count
Love
Pradeep

9.

Sir

My name is _____ I live in _____ and have been trying to find the meaning of Life and this world for a few years now.

I recently come across the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharishi and Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj and trying my best to abide in the I Am sense. Consequently I came across your books also and it helped me to deepen the I Am sense. Your quotes are kind of an entry gate into the I Am for me. Thanks a lot for the same. I never understood the teachings of Ramana Maharishi before reading I Am that and your books. You have helped me a lot in understanding the teaching of these Masters. Wish I had come across them before.

But I am still assailed by doubts and despair that if I dont find a living Guru, my sadhana will still not be enough for the goal of Self Realisation. I read in the foreward of your book that you have also did not have a living Guru. Kindly

let me know of your experience with regard to this aspect. Is it imperative to find a living Guru for Enlightenment? Try as I might to surrender to the flow of things and accept everything as they are, doubts still come regarding how I'm progressing. Can you please help me in this regard.
Regards

Pradeep's reply

Thank you for your mail. No it is not essential to come across a living Guru but of course it is essential to come across the teachings in an unadulterated form. Thereafter it is the intensity of your longing for freedom and the Sadhana or practice that counts, that's all.

Love

Pradeep

Sir

Thanks a lot. What you have said really means a lot to me.
Thanks again.
Regards and Love

10.

Hello Pradeep,
I am living in _____. I am male, 59 years and have recently been reading the teachings of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj.

All my life I have been searching for who I really am. 16 months ago I was hospitalised for valium addiction (30 years continuous using). I successfully stopped taking the drug but ever since, the damage to my brain and nervous system means that I am in constant pain with electric shocks going through my body. My sleep is disturbed and I cannot be still at all.

Although I know in my heart that I am not my mind or body, I am continually frustrated in my efforts to meditate on "I Am". The pain keeps my mind occupied and engaged. Can you offer me any advice? How can this pain stop?

Pradeep's reply

Under any adverse circumstances physical or otherwise I wouldn't recommend trying to directly focus on the 'I am'. In such situations the prayer or devotional mode is more effective, you maybe of any faith or religion. This can be done with some feeling like ' O God, like everything you have given me good or bad , this calamity too has been bestowed on me by you, just give me the strength to live through it and even if death comes I breathe my last at your feet' (Remember, the God in you is the 'I am', so indirectly you end up in the 'I am').

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep,

Thank you for your reply. Now I am confused. I was born into _____ but rejected it because I did not believe in a

vengeful or damning God. Since then I have gone my own way. Does this mean I need to repent and return to a doctrine or is the "I Am" enough. By living by desire have I sinned, and if so how do I make amends? Is there such a thing as sin? Sorry for all the questions.

Pradeep's reply

Just forget the past it has no value whatsoever, you do know 'you are' your sense of 'being' or the 'I am' as we call it which has been around throughout your life. It brought you in this world and it'll take you out - so pray to that. I am sorry I didn't know your background otherwise wouldn't have used the word 'God' as it does tend to invoke negative feelings in many. The only sin you have committed is to have believed 'I am the body', do away with this idea and have the firm conviction 'I am not the body.' It does not matter even if you constantly repeat it like a mantra: "I am not the body, I am only the 'I am'," it as good as a prayer.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep,

Thank you so much for the clarification. I have ordered a copy of "I Am That" by Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj because I have only been reading bits and pieces online.

I am excited about 'I am'.

I have another important question. I never asked you if you minded that I email you looking for answers. If you do mind, just tell me.

Over the 16 months I have been ill, I have been working. I

have a wife and a daughter still at home and I have a responsibility to them. Also I have a mortgage to pay. What would happen if I was laid off, or found I could no longer work. Could I ask the "I am" to provide for my needs, my physical, worldly needs? That would not be much. I live modestly. Will the "I am" sustain me and feed me if that is necessary?

I am very grateful to you indeed. I know these are big questions and I also know it is my mind that asks. It is terrified of loss. But that is as it is. My mind will yield to "I am" sooner or later.

Pradeep's reply

The 'I am' cannot solve problems of your usual day to day life as you take it to be, but if you get stabilized in it, it can raise you to level where these problems loose their stranglehold.

love

Pradeep

11.

Dear Pradeep Apte,

I recently bought your book through Lulu and I have been studying it. As I live in _____, what appealed to me about the teachings of Nisargaddata is that a person could directly experience one's true nature by focusing on the 'I am'

without the necessity of a physical guru. I have a question about diet as this is not mentioned in the book but most Hindu spiritual teachings require a vegetarian diet with the addition of avoiding garlic and onions. Did Nisargadatta say that a vegetarian diet is required to follow his teachings?

Looking forward to your answer and any other guidance you can offer.

Pradeep's reply

Thank you for your mail. The most important thing about diet is that you should know very well what suits your digestive system best and what doesn't. After a certain age you should be able to identify this, the whole idea is that the body, especially the digestive system shouldn't create much of a hassle during your sadhana or practice. Maintaining constancy of timings and quantity are additional benefits. You shouldn't be too fastidious or fussy about food either as your main objective is the sadhana and not food.

These are some conclusions I could draw from a Marathi book titled 'Gurubodhanand' on Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj by one of his close disciples. The book describes very minute details about Maharaj's day to day living.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep,
Thank you for your quick and clear reply.
Love

12.

Dear Pradeep,
Staying with the I AM requires patience for me. What I am doing is like this. I start by asking myself Who am I. Then I point the awareness to the point of awareness in me. I find that it takes patience as my awareness moves. But lately, I notice that during the meditation in the evenings a few times I really get into the awareness watching awareness. Invariably when this happens, its towards the end of the meditation session and then I have to get up (since I have to get up for dinner with the family or they will wait till I come even I tell them to start dinner). I have been practicing what you have told me, that is to cut all thoughts. This is better now then when I first started. Do you have any advise for me since I trust your judgement.
By the way, congratulations on the publishing of your books. It's good that more people can have access to the teachings of Maharaj through your explanations like in Nisagadatta Gita.
respectfully,

Pradeep's reply

Thanks for your mail, whatever movement you observe is that of the mind, the awareness stands as it is.

Perseverance is the only key to remain in the purity of your being, so 'just be', that's all. The conditioning to move to towards anything else except than to 'just be' is so strongly ingrained in everybody that it has become your enemy and sub-consciously obstructs 'just being' to the extent that you don't develop the conviction that anything so simple could work! But have faith in your 'being' for that is the only reality you can know. Do all this so silently that nobody, not even your family should know that you are 'just being' and they wouldn't have to wait for you for dinner. Do continue with the practice as it helps to 'just be' or makes it easier.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep,

Thank you for replying to my email. I appreciate the advice and guidance. Just to be clear, what exactly do you mean by "just be" and "being"? Is it the same as awareness watching awareness? I find that if I do not understand it I can go in the wrong direction without clarity.

I will greatly appreciate your guidance.

Pradeep's reply

Yes, its only different ways of putting it, as awareness watching awareness implies some effort while 'just being'

is more natural. In fact the 'I am' or sense of 'being' is very crucial here:

'I am' + content = witnessing happens to the awareness

'I am' - content = pure awareness = just being

The practice AWA is just to achieve the latter, which is naturally 'just being'. The whole idea is to strike a synchronicity where you naturally and uninterruptedly remain in the awareness while other activity can go on. Once this is achieved you don't need the AWA practice, you have entered your natural rhythm.

Love

Pradeep

13.

Hello,

I hope this message finds you well.

I was given the Nisargadatta Gita by _____ and have been reading from it for a little over a month now. I was hoping you wouldn't mind a couple of questions about it. First, I have been through some of the "camps" you refer to in "the wandering." One specifically, that of Eckhart Tolle, has provided me with an awareness of the only sense of being or I am-ness I have yet come to. So far I can feel my presence as a bodily sensation: the body feels alive and light and my own presence seems to focus different places in the body at different times. Sometimes in the head around the eyes, and sometimes in the chest or abdomen area. I have read that my presence or I am-ness is beyond

the body so I wonder--should I continue to feel my bodily presence and try and go deeper with it? It does feel pretty peaceful and nice and seems to slow the mind a bit. But where does one go from the feeling of 'my bodily presence' to find and understand the 'I am' in every way? I assume there is a more obvious and discernible "I am" feeling that should be arrived at.

Second, I have not yet been able to "go back in time to the moment when it dawned on me that 'I am.'" The earliest memories I have yet found of selfhood are of the feeling, "I hate myself, I wish I was never born." Prior to that I can vaguely remember a happy and blissful early childhood. Is it necessary to find that moment when the "I am" began and should I continue to look for it?

Thank you so much for your time and for preparing this book, I am finding it helpful so far.

Pradeep's reply

Thank you for your mail. The bodily sensations would very much be there, you are a sensory instrument that is alive. Your 'being' began with a single cell which later on became the 'being' of an 8 cell embryo and gradually it became the 'being' of your entire body. This 'being' you could only sense after the age of three or so because then your 5 element and 3 quality composition was conducive or permitted for it to be so, something not possible in the earlier stages of your development. This 'being' gave you the feeling 'I am' which was initially non-verbal and later as you got conditioned you could say verbally in your native language, 'I am' or 'I am so-and-so'. So the

'being' is not located anywhere specifically in your body but only that it is 'sensed' by the brain as 'I am'. Never mind if you cannot catch the first time you came to know that 'I am', you can still catch it when you get up in the morning. In fact it has always been there with you and even right now as you read this mail it is there, you cannot perceive or conceive anything without it. This 'being' is common to all, every object, regardless of size or shape. Even non-living objects like a rock have a 'being' except that their 5 element and 3 quality combinations do not permit the sensing or expressing of the 'being' as 'I am'.

It is interesting to note that you mention 'The earliest memories I have yet found of selfhood are of the feeling, "I hate myself, I wish I was never born."'. Now, why did you feel so? Or what was in it you that made these feelings arise? There must be something in you that prompted these feelings – it is your true unborn self! Focus your attention on the one who had these feelings – quite obviously it was a happy or blissful state which was prior to you being born, otherwise you'd have never felt so.

Catching hold of the 'I am' in its absolute purity is important you may devise as many ways that suit you, recollecting the first rising of the 'I am' is one useful way suggested by Maharaj as most minds like things ordered in a chronological pattern.

I hope you find my words useful.

Love

Pradeep

14.

Dear Dr.Apte,

I accidentally came across your Map for Self-Realization. It's a great piece of work. The short description which accompanies the map is rather vague for a novice.

I have read the book "I AM THAT", but it's a bit difficult to get cross-reference to your Map I was wondering whether you have a detailed explanation of the Map.

If it is available, I would highly appreciate if you could mail it to me.

Kind regards

Pradeep's reply

Thanks for your mail, I am sorry I don't have a detailed description. I you have any specific questions you may ask.

Love

Pradeep

Thank you for your mail.

I have italicised the way I would interpret a part of your map.

Kindly send me your opinion and rectify as required.

Thanking you for you trouble in advance.

1. **Absolute** --> In the unknowable depth of the Absolute exits the ocean of Awareness on which arise the waves of consciousness.

When Infinite Consciousness begins to stir, it leads to the reflection of the Absolute in consciousness.

2. (Awareness reflected in Objects as Individual Consciousness Beingness (Self Awareness)) ---> **Object**

Consciousness, in order to manifest itself, needs a physical body, with which it identifies itself. (No body, no consciousness and no consciousness, no body)

3. (Awareness reflected in Objects as Individual Consciousness Beingness (Self Awareness) and Sense of being known as - --> **I AM**

The sense of being - Conscious Presence leads to the arising of the thought I AM.

4. (The sense of being develops, false identification with object believing it to be body and mind) ---> **I AM & Primary Illusion.**

Due to the sense 'I AM' arising, the condition of duality appears.

5. I AM goes to (No Identification with Object) --> Awareness --> Absolute

When I AM (which is the first emanation of consciousness) is stayed with and everything else discarded, acts as a Portal to the ABSOLUTE.

6. In your chart the sequence is individual Consciousness, Object and the I AM.

*Do individual consciousness, body and I AM appear simultaneously or not?
If not, what is the sequence?*

7. Why does the red arrow go from I AM via (No Identification with Object) to Awareness.

***Pradeep's reply,
You have got it quite correct with a slight modification in understanding:***

(1)The Absolute stands as it is there can be no modifications in it, so from the very beginning it always appears to be so. Thus your starting lines should be something like:

***1. Absolute --> In the unknowable depth of the Absolute(there appears to) exits the ocean of Awareness on which arise the waves of consciousness(appear to arise).
When Infinite Consciousness begins (appears) to stir. It***

(appears to) leads to the reflection of the Absolute in consciousness.

Thus forth it should continue, only with the arising of 'I am' what appears to have occurred becomes perceptible due to duality.

(2) I prefer to stick to using the word object rather than body, it could be any object from the smallest atom to a mountain. The expression of the 'I am' would depend on the five elemental + three qualities composition of the object, as it permits so in a human body but not so for a rock.

(3) They do appear to arise simultaneously, the sequence is only for a two dimensional expression.

(4) The red arrow goes straight to awareness, a rare occurrence in some saint like Jnaneshwera, who never ever identified with the body right from birth, he was born 'realized'. Thus from the very onset if you are not identified with the body you are ever there in the awareness – which is in fact the true state of affairs.

This map is just a guideline to understand the teaching or more specifically the 'I am' which I have made an attempt to clarify more explicitly in my 'Nisargadatta Gita'. This done the next and most important is the Sadhana which is to abide in the 'I am' – only then would you have the realization that all this has never ever been so and thus rest in peace. I have hinted towards this in the last lines of

the description of the map.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the clarification.

When Maharaj says: "Stay in the I AM, Be in the I AM", does he refer to the non-verbal I AM or the verbal I AM.

I have been going through your Nisargadatta Gita (excellent piece of work).

When you talk about the I AM there, do you mean the non-verbal I AM or the verbal I AM.

Pradeep's reply

Yes it is the non-verbal 'I am', you may even understand it as the plain and simple background of awareness that has been ever so with you when it first arose and confronted everyday at the beginning in the morning when you wake up - I have even called it the nascent 'I am'.

Love

Pradeep

Nisargadatta Gita Quote Nr. 156 -----

The very earliest 'I am' was devoid of name and form, free from words, non-verbal.

Gradually, as the processes of conditioning begin, the non-verbal 'I am' becomes

the verbal 'I am'. You learn words and language which accumulate on the pure nonverbal 'I am'. Through your senses you perceive the body which requires food and vital breath for sustenance. The 'I am' identifies with the body and you say 'I am so-and-so'. Despite all these coverings, the indwelling knowledge of the Self or the pure 'I am' is always there. It is only a question of putting aside everything, uncovering it and getting stabilized in it - which is the 'Sadhana' (practice) that is being prescribed.

My understanding:

*First comes the non-verbal **I AM** and then through conditioning it becomes the verbal **I AM**.*

*That means we are in the verbal **I AM** at the body level and we have to discard all the add-ons to enter the non-verbal **I AM** state again*

This is actually self-explanatory and acceptable.

----- Pointers by Ramesh Balsekar: Page-91 : The Seed of Consciousness -----

1. In the original state, absolute **I**, prevails without any knowledge or conditioning, without attributes, without form or identity.

This should be the non-verbal I AM. Is it what is meant?

2. Then, for no apparent reason (other than that it is its nature to do so), arises the thought or concept **I AM**, the Impersonal Consciousness, on which the world appears as a living-dream.

Which I AM is meant here? Is this still the non-verbal I AM?

3. Consciousness, in order to manifest itself, needs a form, a physical body, with which it identifies itself and thus starts the concept of 'bondage', with an imaginary objectivization of 'I'.

This should be the verbal I AM. Is it what is meant?

----- I AM THAT I AM by Stephe Wolinsky:
Pages-16 to 19 -----

The verbal I AM

According to Nisargadatta Maharaj, the verbal **I AM** is all you can say about yourself after you say, **I AM**. All else after this verbal **I AM** is to be discarded as it cannot be true.

The non-verbal **I AM**

The non-verbal **I AM** is when you do not use your thoughts, memory, emotions, associations, perceptions or intentions.

The NON-Verbal **I AM** is the stateless state or No-State state that is prior to the verbal **I AM**.
It is the **GATEWAY** and touchstone to the **NOTHINGNESS**

The **I AM** as condensed **CONSCIOUSNESS** acts as a lens through which **CONSCIOUSNESS** reflects.
This reflected projection of **CONSCIOUSNESS** through the **I AM**, once identified with, forms the "I" and the world in which we live. The **I AM** and its reflected appearances give the illusion that there are two or more substances separate from the **I AM** and **CONSCIOUSNESS**.

In this way **CONSCIOUSNESS** reflects out thoughts, etc. and acts as the glue which holds the entire illusionary world together.

The reflections of **CONSCIOUSNESS** through the **I AM** , when identified with, become the major veil that covers the pure **I AM** and the **CONSCIOUSNESS** of which the **I AM** is made of.

When the **I AM** is stayed with, or turned upon itself, it evaporates and is no longer, then there is only pure **CONSCIOUSNESS** and the **ABSOLUTE**.

Do you agree with Stephen Wolinsky's definitions and explanations?

How does the non-verbal I AM and verbal I AM appear?

In your Map for Self-Realization where would you put in the non-verbal I AM.

The I AM which is in the map, is it the verbal I AM?

Pradeep's reply

There is but only one 'I am' appearing as a sense of being or 'I-am-ness', non-verbal in its nascent state and verbal when we learn a language. It is a single 'I am' when it appears in the paravani and later moving through the pashyanti, madhyama to vaikahri or the spoken word. In fact whatever we speak has its origin in the paravani. It is a single vani but only classified for the sake of understanding.

Thus non-verbal and verbal are only for the sake of understanding, there is only one 'I am'. The practice begins with the verbal 'I am' and as you stabilize in it, it grows subtler till it comes to the paravani level and then disappears.

All these levels of the 'I am' are clear if you follow the blue theme by the side of the red one. I would place the non-verbal 'I am' beginning from the para to the para-pashyanti level.

In fact, actually, you can never write or speak the non-verbal 'I am' but only recognize or feel it.

I can only make an attempt to pass on my own understanding which has come from prolonged reflection on Maharaj's teachings (Marathi tapes and 'I am That' in Marathi) without adding anything from anybody else's explanations. Thus I cannot comment on anything said by Mr Balsekar or Mr Wolinsky.

Stick to your understanding which I feel is correct and focus on the 'I am' only, never mind if initially it's verbal, with practice you'd recede into the non-verbal.

Love

Pradeep

15.

Thank you so very much for the Nisargadatta Gita! I AM THAT was the first non-dual text I read a few years ago and I love it dearly but it's full power was not released on me until I read your Gita. Reading each 231 of your explanations put me into I AM. At 18 years old I became intensely interested in religion going from Christianity, back to my Jewish roots and Cabala, to the various occult mystery teachings, Plato, and then about three years ago I was blessed when a cousin of my wife introduced me to Vedanta.

Interestingly to me, my earliest memories were similar to yours. It hit me pretty hard when I read your prologue. I recollect rather vividly being in a crib at around three years of age. There was a large rectangular window and sunlight

came in, struck me, and I heard a woman's voice apparently coming from the sun. After that, I heard voices coming from another room. It was a man's voice and a woman's voice. The woman's voice was the same and I assume it was my mothers. To this day I can hear the woman's voice and the sounds she made although it sounds like gibberish. I believe I now recall the feeling in my crib after reading your Gita. If I had to describe it I would say it was warm, full, and lovely; the words alone and alive come to me to explain it. My next memories are when I was a little older, playing with the little girl that lived next door to me. We lived in a valley, _____.

What I blessing it would be if you respond to my email!!!! I don't know what else to say.

Pradeep's reply

Thank you for your mail. I hope you succeed in your quest for peace and happiness.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep

Thank you so much for your response! If I may ask a quick question: I seem to be identifying I AM" with a good deal of emotion/feeling (mostly a nice sensation in the chest and some heart beating). Should I try to grab hold of a "purer" form of I AM. This question has been arising during my

practice and distracting me. I would greatly appreciate your advice.

Many thanks.

Pradeep's reply

You must hold onto the 'I am' in its absolute purity with no adjuncts whatsoever related to body-mind. This 'I am' is nothing but your plain and simple day-to-day background of awareness that has been with you ever since it first appeared around the age of three and is still there when you wake up in the morning.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep,

That is very helpful. Many thanks again. Please wish me luck and what a joy it would be if I could someday meet you.

Pradeep's reply

My good wishes are always with you in your quest for your true identity.

Love

Pradeep

16.

Dear Shri Apte Ji

Namaste!

First of all, please accept my sincere regards and thanks for posting and sharing such valuable treasures in your website at [scribd.com](https://www.scribd.com). Your pictures regarding the visit to navnath guru samadhis was inspiring.

Eversince I read 'I am That' couple of years ago, i have been hooked to Maharaj's teachings and have been trying to dig deeper to the best of my capabilities. And I have read your explanations in the documents that you shared. They are extremely helpful in getting the grasp of teachings. With that context, let me come to the context of this email. Although I was wanting to write to you to convey my thanks but it was a question (need for clarification) that prompted me to come to action.

I would be obliged if you could clear my doubt with your own personal experience and understanding. My query is as follows

All along the teachings as maharaj said and you have rightly explained that one has to go back to the 'Primitive I' because that is the starting point. You had explained that one needs to discard all thoughts except 'I' and find out how it originated.

Although, its understandable from a conceptual view point, my concern is that how to approach this in practice. When you mention '*discard all thoughts except 'I'*' and that '*mind will resist in beginning but will succumb*

eventually'. What does this mean. Does it mean that one needs to ignore the noise/chattering in the mind OR does it mean that one should hold on to the gaps between two thoughts.

I would appreciate if you could provide some guidance with your direct experience.

Pradeep's reply:

Thank you for your mail. You must first understand the impersonal background awareness or the silent impartial witnessing background which Maharaj calls the 'I am' without words. I have named it as the nascent 'I am' when you first came to know that 'you are' or the first perception of 'just being' when you wake up in the morning. Now, if you have understood this (and I am sure with careful observation you can notice this background), it is this background awareness that has to watch itself. When the 'I am' without words watches itself it is at its purest, devoid of any content, here is where other thoughts budge in that you have to wade away by saying 'sorry, I am only watching that I am'. The mind, which is nothing but a collection of post-I am add-ons doesn't like this, so it resists and tries to lure you into other thoughts. That is all is the practice or 'Sadhana', to abide in the 'I am' wherein the 'I am' watches itself only and nothing else at all.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Shri Apte Ji

Thanks very much for your response. This clarifies and confirms my understanding as well.

Indeed, I have noticed this nascent I am. It comes spontaneously and gets lost between two chains of thoughts. I must confess that my attempts so far to '*Abide in I am*' have not been very successful.

But I will keep trying.

If you dont mind, can I come back to you with further questions if I get lost.

Thanks again.

Pradeep's reply
you are most welcome !
Pradeep

17.

Dear Dr. Apte,

In your map, you place the world at the bottom. Is this because the world is created by the individual's consciousness, or is it because a *feeling* that there is a world is created by the individual's consciousness? Worded differently, is your map saying that the world is created by a single consciousness, or that we all create a feeling of the

world within our individual consciousnesses?

Pradeep's reply

Thank you for your mail. There is no specific reason for placing the world below in the map, except that its like a flow chart from the Absolute to the World and back. Both the world and the body exist only in the finite individual consciousness.

Love

Pradeep

I guess I'm still a little confused, so I'll ask it in a more straightforward way: is life a dream?

Pradeep's reply

Yes, but Illusion is a better word

I appreciate your responses, I hope you don't mind if I ask you some more questions.

I was recently put on medicine for schizophrenia so I'm trying to figure out exactly what is going on. What I'm trying to figure out is if I am the only awareness/consciousness (or whatever you want to call it). It seems like this is what you (and the other teachings) are indicating.

If so, where do I go from here? How long have I been playing this game? Is there any eternal rest, or am I doomed to repeat the cycle forever?

Pradeep's reply

The nature of the mind or thought is schizophrenic, its intensity varying from person to person, if you have to take a medicine for it, it's alright because physically there is no other way out. But, you must always remember that you are neither the mind or thoughts nor even the body and person you believe yourself to be. You are the pure formless 'being' that you can even 'sense' right now, firmly abide there, then whatever happens doesn't matter at all and you are free forever. Earnestly worship and abide in this pure 'being' and it'll engulf you one day. By pure 'being' I mean the 'I am' without any adjuncts whatsoever.

Love

Pradeep

18.

Dear Pradeep,

Do you find any value in the use of a mantra if the mind is all over the place on some days? If so, could you recommend a mantra? Some days are GREAT and others, not so great!

There are times during my meditation when it seems like I am falling asleep, but I'm aware of it. Sometimes I experience it as total peace for a few moments, but then I am abruptly and forcefully pulled back to myself.

Something tells me I need to let go at this point, but I don't know how. I'm not sure I'm even given the choice. It just

seems that I come back to myself.
What do I do?

Pradeep's reply

Meditation is only one of the many means that enable you to come back to the 'I am' again and again - and as you have observed it may or may not work on some days.

Chanting of a mantra is useful at other times where I usually chant "Deham Naham" or "I am not the Body" and sometimes in a more acute way "I am Unborn". At times when I am terribly upset or facing a crisis in life I shift to a more devotional or Bhakti mode and I read the 'Sri Ram Raksha Stotra' or chant "Sri Ram", you may select any diety to whom you can easily and lovingly surrender and let it take care of everything. In "Sr-i R-am" if you remove the 'Sr' and 'R' you are left with 'I am'!

You have to devise different means for different situations, but all of them should bring you back to the 'I am' and help you transcend it.

I hope you find this useful

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep,

I confess that I am not familiar with Indian-style chanting. I will learn more when I visit India early next year. Is it possible for you to make a recording of a small part of the

"Deham Naham" chant, or point me to a place where I can find such a style of chant?

Pradeep's reply

I wouldn't recommend getting after the style of chanting a mantra too much as it would only distract you, even if you say 'I am not the body' it's enough. Many chants of the "OM" or other mantras are available on internet and they all mean or point towards the 'I am' directly or indirectly.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep,

Ok, I understand fully. Thank you very much again for your help!

19.

Dear Shri Apteji

I have been 'trying' to practice the meditation on I AM for past few months and facing some difficulties like wandering of the mind to thoughts and then coming back.

This has raised a question in my mind with regards to my approach towards meditation on I am.

My question may sound like a pointless intellectual debate but to me it's a genuine confusion.

Prior to my tryst with 'I am That' I was practicing the 'choiceless awareness' as prescribed by J Krishnamurti. I would try to pay all my attention on the observation of thoughts and feelings. But now as Maharaj has said, focus on 'I Am', I tend to ignore thoughts (instead of observing them). But then, thoughts keep coming.

So I was forced to rethink on Maharaj's message. Is the 'I Am' meditation an approach that means exclusion/disregarding of thoughts/feelings?

I am sure you can understand my confusion here because you have read both masters and therefore can help me in this dilemma.

Pradeep's reply

Thank you for your mail. I am just cut pasting an answer given to a similar query on Meditation:

"Meditation is only one of the many means that enable you to come back to the 'I am' again and again - and as you have observed it may or may not work on some days. Chanting of a mantra is useful at other times where I usually chant "Deham Naham" or "I am not the Body" and sometimes in a more acute way "I am Unborn". At times when I am terribly upset or facing a crisis in life I shift to a more devotional or Bhakti mode and I read the

'Sri Ram Raksha Stotra' or chant "Sri Ram", you may select any deity to whom you can easily and lovingly surrender and let it take care of everything. In "Sr-i R-am" if you remove the 'Sr' and 'R' you are left with 'I am'!

You have to devise different means for different situations, but all of them should bring you back to the 'I am' and help you transcend it."

As for JK, his complete teaching in a single line is : In the 'choiceless awareness' of 'what is' one realizes that 'the observer is the observed'. Or to put it differently when one is done away with all the concepts all that remains is the 'pure being' or the 'pure I am' with no adjuncts whatsoever. It's like the 'awareness watching the awareness' or the 'I am watching the I am', because the moment you make a choice you have entered a concept and deviated from the observer or the 'I am'.

So, all these great masters essentially mean exactly the same except that their ways of putting it are different. It depends on each individual's nature as to which teaching he finds more conducive or suitable.

I would strongly recommend understanding one single master and sticking to what he taught and prescribed. A similar confusion also arises when one tries to draw parallels between Sri Ramana and Sri Nisargadatta, a subject too vast to discuss here.

Just to give an example, the 'I am' meditation is only the beginning like you initially begin driving lessons. Later on, when you are a skilled driver, you may talk, listen to music, plan your day, that is, have 'n' number of thoughts but you never forget the driving lessons you learnt,

*otherwise the car would stop or you may have a hit.
I hope you find these words useful.*

Love

Pradeep

Dear Apteji

Thanks very much for your response. I heartfully appreciate this.

It certainly did help me place my doubt in right perspective.

Interestingly, your answer as really helped me because I happen do be doing the same things as you mentioned.

In 1st half of your response you mentioned japa, meditation, bhakti as various means to go back to I Am. In my case, I do sing bhajans and do some japa depending on the mood/situation but I never realized that I could use it to go back to the 'I am'. So thanks very much for clarifying this.

And then later in the 2nd half you have recommended to stick to one master. My problem is that besides, japa, meditation etc, I have this habit/hobby to read about various masters and lots of times it helps me understand few points from various perspectives. But there are times when I find them conflicting. And that's how this confusion came.

*Respected Shri Pradeepji,
"Go on to know the 'I am' without
words, you must be that and not
deviate from it for even a moment,
and then it will disappear"*

*(i) How do we concentrate on the 'I AM' when at work.
Don't we have to deviate from the IAM in order to do
work? In that case, how is it possible to remain undeviated
even for a moment?*

*(ii) I am not able to discriminate between the two
conditions - whether I am being in the 'I AM' or becoming
lethargic because many times I just don't feel like doing or
thinking anything. But, I enjoy that state.
Please help.*

Pradeep's reply

***Thank you for your mail. It's a good question that you
have put up and most likely to arise when one reads this
quote. It's not possible that Maharaj would advise us from
not doing any work, so let us look at the deeper meaning.
Work you have too and work you will but always
remember that whatever you may do it cannot be possible
without your 'being' or the 'I am' which forms the very
fundamental basis of all your interactions or activities -
you just have to get aware of this and always bear it in mind.***

To give a few examples, there are people in your life whom you love very much, it maybe a parent, brother, sister, friend, beloved or spouse. In the beginning of your relationship they were all your world, all that you knew and they were constantly in mind. Later on as life went on you did all your work, but did you forget them for even a moment? If you have had an intimate relationship even with one of them, they are always there with you - that sort of relationship you must develop with the 'I am'. Another example is that of driving. Initially when you were having your driving lessons you were completely focused on them. As you become a skilled driver, you talk, listen to music or have other thoughts but you never forget your driving lessons for even a moment otherwise the car would stop or you'd have a hit. The 'I am' is there with you right from birth like your ability to swim which you only have to relearn. To get effortlessly embedded in the 'I am' initially you may have to set times for meditation like you did for your driving lessons. Later on, all your work may go on, in fact with even a greater efficiency you'd never forget or leave the 'I am'. If you have done this with earnestness and having a faith in your Guru, a moment would come when you will transcend the 'I am', it will disappear, leaving you as your true being - The Absolute or Parabrahman. I hope you find these words useful.

Love

Pradeep

Respected Sir,

Thanks a lot for a very prompt response.

As and when I get even a little time, I try to be to myself either chanting or trying to look within. In fact nowadays, when I go in the midst of a gathering, I find myself out of place and many a times, do not know what to talk. I am quite at ease with this state of mine (though I do not know whether it is right or wrong.)

My problem is that I am not able to keep cool at all times and burst out at times. And then realize that I should not have done that. What do I do to remain within at such times?

In the example that you have given, you have said "later on as life went on you did all your work, but did you forget them for even a moment?" I am not able to grasp the meaning of this sentence. Because when we are into some other activity, we do not think about them. In fact, while engaged in some other activity, we at times even forget certain duties towards them. Is it not forgetfulness? For ex. - I have promised my son that I would be getting something for him while returning from work. But while returning back, I forget to take it. Doesn't that mean that I had forgotten my son or his requirement for that particular period (though only for some time.).

Similar is the case with the I AM. While doing something or reacting to some situation, the fact that I have to focus only on the 'I AM' goes underneath and I get fully involved in the situation.

Could you please enlighten me on how to overcome such situation?

Pradeep's reply

In the example 'did not forget' implies in an indirect way where you have it as a feeling of reassurance, security, a refuge where you can always resort to, come what may. Just leave the examples if you cannot take hold them at once and continue your sravana, manana and nididhyasana of the dialogues of Maharaj or the complete 'I am' quotes or the Nisargadatta Gita.

Meditation at fixed times is only one of the means to get stabilized in the 'I am' but there are times when it may not go well with thoughts disturbing. There are different ways like chanting a mantra like 'Deham Naham' or 'I am not the body' or even 'I am unborn'. In times of distress or a calamity shifting to the bhakti mode or surrender mode is very helpful like I read the 'Ram Raksha Stotra' or saying 'Sri Ram', 'Namasmarana' as they call it. You can select any mantra that suits you or any diety which you easily love or can surrender. You have to devise different ways for different situations in life, the means I have suggested all lead to the 'I am', directly or indirectly so it doesn't matter really. What is important is your persistence with the practice and not losing hope and giving it up.

You have to strike a balance or rhythm between your sadhana(practice) and your worldly life in such way that nobody even comes to know that you a sadhaka. Do your work and serve your family with love and to the best of your ability and carry on sadhana quietly using different means depending on the situation.

Do not worry at all if you fail or falter at times, this is

something that is bound to happen in the process.

Love

Pradeep

Respected Sir,

Thank you very much for the clarifications. I shall try my best to abide by them.

21.

Dear Pradeep,

Like yourself, I have been reading and studying along this path for many years. Just lately I have read many of the books of Nisargadatta's dialogues. There are many people and websites popping up on the web claiming to teach in Sri Nisargadatta's tradition about nonduality. I am not going to ask you to pick the wheat from the chaff, but rather to help me with some possible insight into one particular question. I am not sure if I can even express this adequately, but here it goes.

Many teachers state that the Ultimate is Pure Awareness , prior to "I Am". I don't see that. I see the Absolute as beyond all levels of Reality that we know or can even imagine. It is not just part of the spectrum of being, but

both beyond and the source of all Realities. I found what you refer to in "I Am the Absolute" when you wrote "the Absolute is beyond Presence and Absence" and in the "Dimensionless Map" as the Absence of Absence, is one of the clearest expressions of the Inexpressible That. I am interpreting Presence as Pure Awareness. Beyond presence and its absence is the Absolute that gives rise to the multiple universes. (Putting all this down on paper seems so inadequate.)

Am I splitting hairs with this question or is "Pure Awareness unaware of itself" what Nisargadatta was referring to as the Absolute?

Pradeep's reply

There is no need to split your hair over it, you are correct in your understanding. I guess in lieu of any good words these teachers may have used the words "Pure awareness" even Maharaj has done so at one point in 'I am That'. But yes pure awareness is Presence – just presence – devoid of any content or the 'I am' in its purity which is where you have to abide as a first step as prescribed by Maharaj. As your 'Sadhana' (Practice) strengthens what would happen? When you touch your pure Presence you can feel this subtle Presence and there would be periods when you'd just roll over into an Absence only to return back to the Presence. This shuttling back and forth from Presence to Absence is the probably the last trace of duality that still lingers as the so called 'knot' between the body and the spirit is yet unbroken. Many practitioners even after coming to this

stage believe the Absence to be the Absolute and fail to transcend

the duality and here is where the genius of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj lies. His statements like the one you have given or his saying that you are not the being or non-being or you are beyond knowing and not-knowing all imply the Absolute. He also goes onto say something more acute like “When this concept ‘I am’ departs there will be no memory left that ‘I was’ and ‘I had’ those experiences, the very memory will be erased”

There is yet another way to look at it wherein lies the key to understanding what does it mean by the disappearance of the Presence or the ‘I am’. When you touch this Presence for a prolonged period you start perceiving it in ‘every object’ around you, whatever objects it maybe – living or non-living. In such a situation the ‘I am’ is bound to disappear as it is only the ‘I am’ everywhere, nothing else! Imagine a picture where all the pixels are identical you’d see nothing – just as you can see the plain background on which I am writing this text, you are drowned in a sea of ‘I am’ and it dissolves or disappears! From the Absolute point of view why is it unaware of itself? Simply because it doesn’t require any self awareness, how can it have any requirements at all? Given its non-objective or formless nature this ‘whole being of the body and world’ was in any case an illusion that never came to be! Hence Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj calls it the unborn – which is what you actually are.

I hope this helps your understanding.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep,

Thank you so much for your detailed answer. I have read it twice, absorbing more each time. I will keep it and study it within your other writings that I downloaded. There is so much more to go to strengthen my practice.

I look forward to your next posting on Scribd. Which reminds me that I also wanted to say how great it is that you are sharing your understanding with anyone free of charge! I believe this is in the true spirit of Maharaj. I hope you are thinking of putting your understanding of the core teaching of Sri Nisargadatta in one book. It would be terrific and a worthy addition to Nisargadatta canon. Your comments in the Nisargadatta Gita deepens the understanding of his dialogues, especially for a westerner.

Thank you again for the correspondence and I look forward to our future e-mails

21.

Hello I have been reading all of your stuff and am wondering, you say that the I AM drops away when you stay in it, now are you saying that the concept aka thought I AM drops away or the actual feeling of I AM or I EXIST, it

sounds like you say once you stay in the wordless I AM the thought story of ME dies, and then the wordless I AM drops as well, leaving the absolute, or do you mean that the absolute is the wordless I AM or presence awareness? This is troubling me, before I go into this deeply I need to know.

Pradeep's reply

No the Absolute is not the wordless 'I am' or the 'presence awareness' but beyond it. I recently received a question which is a bit similar to yours so I am sending you the question and the answer given by me. It goes like this:

The Question:

Like yourself, I have been reading and studying along this path for many years. Just lately I have read many of the books of Nisargadatta's dialogues. There are many people and websites popping up on the web claiming to teach in Sri Nisargadatta's tradition about nonduality. I am not going to ask you to pick the wheat from the chaff, but rather to help me with some possible insight into one particular question. I am not sure if I can even express this adequately, but here it goes.

Many teachers state that the Ultimate is Pure Awareness, prior to "I Am". I don't see that. I see the Absolute as beyond all levels of Reality that we know or can even imagine. It is not just part of the spectrum of being, but both beyond and the source of all Realities. I found what

you refer to in "I Am the Absolute" when you wrote "the Absolute is beyond Presence and Absence" and in the "Dimensionless Map" as the Absence of Absence, is one of the clearest expressions of the Inexpressible That. I am interpreting Presence as Pure Awareness. Beyond presence and it's absence is the Absolute that gives rise to the multiple universes. (Putting all this down on paper seems so inadequate.)

Am I splitting hairs with this question or is "Pure Awareness unaware of itself" what Nisargadatta was referring to as the Absolute?

My answer:

There is no need to split your hair over it, you are right in your understanding. I guess in lieu of any good words these teachers may have used the words "Pure awareness" even Maharaj has done so at one point in 'I am That'. But yes pure awareness is Presence – just presence – devoid of any content or the 'I am' in its purity which is where you have to abide as a first step as prescribed by Maharaj. As your 'Sadhana' (Practice) strengthens what would happen? When you touch your pure Presence you can feel this subtle Presence and there would be periods when you'd just roll over into an Absence only to return back to the Presence. This shuttling back and forth from Presence to Absence is the probably the last trace of duality that still lingers as the so called 'knot' between the body and the spirit is yet unbroken. Many practitioners even after coming to this stage believe the Absence to be the Absolute and fail to transcend the duality and here is where the genius of Sri

Nisargadatta Maharaj lies. His statements like the one you have given or his saying that you are not the being or non-being or you are beyond knowing and not-knowing all imply the Absolute. He also goes onto say something more acute like “When this concept ‘I am’ departs there will be no memory left that ‘I was’ and ‘I had’ those experiences, the very memory will be erased”

There is yet another way to look at it wherein lies the key to understanding what does it mean by the disappearance of the Presence or the ‘I am’. When you touch this Presence for a prolonged period you start perceiving it in ‘every object’ around you, whatever objects it maybe – living or non-living. In such a situation the ‘I am’ is bound to disappear as it is only the ‘I am’ everywhere, nothing else! Imagine a picture where all the pixels are identical you’d see nothing – just as you can see the plain background on which I am writing this text, you are drowned in a sea of ‘I am’ and it dissolves or disappears! From the Absolute point of view why is it unaware of itself? Simply because it doesn’t require any self awareness, how can it have any requirements at all? Given its non-objective or formless nature this ‘whole being of the body and world’ was in any case an illusion that never came to be! Hence Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj calls it the unborn – which is what you actually are.

I hope you find this useful.

Love

Pradeep

Ok when you speak of being only in the I AM with no content, how can I separate my self from the content? Do you mean sensations should not be present? I can be in a wordless aware state but sensations still arise, I don't identify with any of them in particular, is that alright? Also I am wondering then if people like _____ and _____, a direct student of Maharaj are actually speaking from the absolute? These were the last gurus I thought I was going to be getting pointing from... They say I am already what I seek, which is presence-awareness. Do they know that even that drops, but they are hesitant to tell us? Or are these people deluded or just partially realized. I believe the absence only occurred once and when 'I' came out there was some innate knowing that my true state was eternal, one, and most of all pure consciousness, years later now I am not even sure what pure consciousness is, maybe because of my initial content question at the beginning. If you can, can you answer each of these questions it would be highly beneficial, I wouldn't be able to thank you enough, if you cant that is alright too, usually the realized ones just drop me irrelevant answers or say you are that.

Pradeep's reply

***I cannot comment on any body else but can only give you replies from my own understanding and experience:
When the 'I am' watches itself or we can the say 'I am' watching the 'I am' is any content possible apart from the 'I am'? Or can any questions arise at that point? If they***

do lest assured you have deviated and content has come in or you have moved into 'post-I am add-ons'. Sensations will arise, you are a biologically alive object as you body and it is due to the 'I am' that these sensations are conveyed through sensory nervous system and your response could be voluntary or involuntary it doesn't matter. You should understand that these are responses of the body to external or internal stimuli conveyed via the 'I am' but are not the 'I am', so let the body respond or take care of itself while you maintain that 'I am still in the I am only' and continue thus with your practice. The 'I am' without content and 'pure consciousness' or 'pure being' are all one and the same.

Do the practice and find it out for yourself rather than depending on anybody, the 'I am' is your best guide and Guru and would lead you to the truth of your being.

Love

Pradeep

Thank you Pradeep, so by content you mean thought mostly? Also if the wordless I AM drops what remains, wouldn't that mean all sensations and life disappear? What is left, or does this only happen after physical death?

Also, if thoughts come up or questions, is that still the I AM watching the I AM as long as I only watch the thought and not think of it as me, thought will be just an object as it is? You make it sound kind of like this can only occur during meditation and thought content will end it... should I not stick with the I AM during daily activities and life as well?

Pradeep's reply

Yes by content I mean thought and by the dropping of the 'I am' you have transcended it thus the 'I am' is available - you may or may not use it. The body with sensations and life would go on as long as the 5 elemental composition permits so, your natural instincts are quite trained enough to do so by birth. Take the example of your ability to swim which is there by birth but only 'unlearnt' by the conditioning to a terrestrial mode of life. You don't learn swimming but just re-learn or remember it again. As for death, when the 5 elemental composition can no longer sustain life it disintegrates and the 'I am' goes back to its source. Through the Sadhana of abiding in the 'I am' you merge it into the source before the disintegration process sets in that's all.

Meditation is only one of the means to come to the 'I am' and stay there and it may or may not work well on all days. You are exposed to so many situations in life that at times you will have to resort to indirect means like chanting a mantra which again point towards the 'I am' like "Deham Naham" or in English "I am not the body". In times of pain, distress or a calamity I read the "Rama Raksha Stotra" or at times just say "Sri Ram" which again means the 'I am', even literally if you remove 'Sr' and 'R' you are left with 'I am' in the words 'Sr-i R-am'. You can select any deity which you love and can easily surrender to and leave everything to it to care of. These are just some suggestions that I found handy even while doing daily activities, you can innovate more, but

remember they must all lead you to the 'I am' as your final objective is to transcend it by abiding in it.

Love

Pradeep

Ah I see, I went into it a bit last night, for about an hour I stayed in the sense. I felt like it had done nothing, but then when I started to walk around it felt as if I was in a space, and the body was doing its own thing, and I was just watching. But I guess that isn't it since that is separation? Is that what you mean by the I AM dropping, the sense of an individual, not the actual existence, maybe the AM just drops? There is no sense of a personal doer that drops?
thank you

Also, what do you mean by absence, total non existence or absence of thought?

Pradeep reply

Don't bother much about the body but be focused on the 'I am' and more so on as to who is it that is witnessing the 'I am'? Is it the same so called 'person' you believe yourself to be? Just ponder and remain there...

There can be no meaning to it, if a meaning or description exists it's not absence, so don't even look for a meaning which is in fact a prompting of your conditioned mind and it will lead you in endless circles.

Thank you Pradeep, is there a better way of communicating more instantly if any more questions arise? I will continue to watch the I AM.

I prefer email because I can attend to it early in the morning, usually between 7 to 9 AM, later I get busy in my work - I have a family to sustain.

Ok no problem, sorry if I'm bothering you at all.

Further

I am confused, everyone is saying that pure awareness or pure consciousness is what we are, and it is the thought-story that drops, and we realize we are the pure subjectivity. Another question is, with the pure consciousness or I AM without thought, does it really even matter if I know about this so called I AM dropping and absolute, since with the staying with the I AM, the going beyond happens by itself on its own accord?

Pradeeps reply

Is it absolutely clear to you as to why at all did you enter into the field of spirituality?

If it is, your focus should be only on abiding in the 'I am' – the Sadhana (practice) - that's all. For if you do so truly and earnestly there is no room for any confusion, doubts or questions anymore, if they still persist then you can be lest assured your mind is evading you from the Sadhana part. There is no escape from the Sadhana, most spiritual seekers never do it or avoid it or do it half-heartedly.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep,

I understand this now, I will guarantee you that I will do it. I have actually got a hang of it today, I don't think I'll have any more questions as I realize they are just moving me away from it yet they had there place. The last question I will ask you, from me to you, or consciousness to consciousness, is how much clock-time do you think it would take to 'fully realize' so to speak? Maharaj for example said 3 years, though I don't know how much of those 3 years he was abiding as the Self, and you of course know an approximate time you could estimate with. This body is 20 years old, and just curious, if it is better that I not know then so be it.

Pradeeps reply ;

Just leave it there for the time being - unsaid, and let the beauty of the silence reveal itself.

22.

Dear Pradeep

I am indeed sorry to bother you but I see no one else to whom I can look forward to help me. My thoughts and thinking have become such a problem that they keep bothering me all day and there seems no end to it. I wish to get rid of all this so that I can be at peace. Can you help me?

Pradeep's reply:

The very nature of thoughts and thinking has to be understood, if you really do understand this it can help you to do away with thought. Thinking is an extremely violent activity that goes on almost continuously except for certain inevitable breaks that occur. Why is thinking such a violent activity? It is because of the inherent nature of thought which has three very fundamental properties in it. Firstly thought is by nature 'violent', secondly thought is 'self-centered' and thirdly thought always has 'anger' hidden in it. So 'violence', 'selfishness' and 'anger' form the very basis of thought and thus the outcome of thinking which comprises of thoughts has to always have these three ingredients. This is usually not easily acceptable but it is this very denial that proves the point.

From the very moment you wake up in the morning, all through the day and till you fall asleep you are being violent, selfish and angry. This is regardless of the content of your thinking, you may believe that, yes, at times it may have been so but then I also had pure, sublime thoughts, religious thoughts, technical thoughts, benevolent thoughts and what not. But no, you are deceiving yourself; all along you were violent, selfish and angry.

All human activities without any exceptions are the outcome thought and thus are violent, self-centered and anger-based. However hard you may try to deny this by offering all sorts of justifications or defenses, ultimately, on a very impartial and deep examination you'd end up with these three only in some form or the other.

My writing this too has violence, selfishness and anger in it. Writing or should I now say pounding away on the keyboard reflects violence - I should be grammatically correct, it should make sense, it should be liked, what great words he wrote! Excellent composition! What would people think if I blew it? Selfishness - I wrote this, people should know, I put my name on

it. Anger - on it not getting noticed, receiving adverse comments and disagreement with my views and so on.

To recognize or understand these three properties of thought or thinking very clearly or without any doubt is absolutely important in any undertaking – spiritual or otherwise. You must be ever aware of these three in all your activities and if you really or honestly do so, it would not only make you sick of thought and thinking but would put an end to it. You'd use thought only when required which is in fact its only purpose inherent in your natural state.

I hope you find this helpful.

Love

Pradeep

Dear Pradeep

Whew! That's more than helpful, I had never looked upon thoughts and thinking in this way!

In gratitude,

23.

Pradeepji

Thank you for mailing me those 'netlogues', I would read them with great interest. Please Sir, could you elaborate a bit more on this you call 'Just being'? In one of the netlogues someone has asked this.

Regards,

*Pradeep's reply,
I am sending a small attachment that contains several points that may help you to understand this.*

The attachment sent:

(Note: In fact, this attachment has been sent to several queries on 'being', 'beingness' or 'just being')

How at this very moment can you actually realize that you don't exist as you believe yourself to be? How can you know at once that you, as you believe yourself to be, are absolutely false?

The Master says that you know for sure that 'you are' or 'I am', you know this sense of 'being' very well. In fact it is the only thing you know beyond doubt, so they tell us to remain firmly established in this thought-free state of perfectly clear self conscious being or the 'I am'.

*How has this sense of 'being' come to be? Did anybody tell you or it appeared spontaneously on its own?
Applying your mind and memory you realize that indeed, this sense of 'being', has come on its own and spontaneously.*

Even on a day to day basis you observe that it comes and goes on its own. You are awake it appears or it's there, you fall asleep it goes. You start dreaming it appears you enter deep dreamless sleep it disappears.

This appearance and disappearance of the sense 'being' or the 'I am' goes on spontaneously, you have no control over it whatsoever. You cannot willingly and indefinitely remain awake or similarly you cannot willingly or indefinitely remain dreaming or in deep sleep.

On what does this 'being' depend or what exactly controls this sense of 'being'? Quite obviously the sense of 'being' depends on the body and is controlled by the rhythm of the body. There cannot be a sense of 'being' or 'I am' without a body.

Although, this sense of 'being' or the 'I am' appears to be dependant on the body there is a certain element of impartiality or neutrality in it. It is quite formless, it is detached or not identified with anything, yet without it nothing is possible.

It is this purest 'being' or 'I am', devoid of any adjuncts or thoughts that the Master is talking of and it is in this 'being' or 'I am' that he tell us to get firmly established.

This 'being' or 'I am' is common to all objects living or non-living, regardless of their size, shape or location. The degrees to which it can be sensed and expressed totally depend on the composition of the object in terms of the five elements and three qualities.

'Being' creates 'being' and 'being' destroys 'being', and yet in all this 'being' remains as it is, untouched, pure

uninvolved. 'Being' is eternal, immortal, the all powerful on which appears the illusion of creation and destruction.

Let us see how this 'being' creates and destroys in light of your own 'being' as a human. The 'being' of your parents sex cells merged into your single celled 'being', which then multiplied and we had the 'being' of a multi-cellular embryo. Finally through a complex process of embryo development and birth your 'being' came to be. This 'being' of yours you could spontaneously 'sense' around the age of there or so as the non-verbal 'I am'. Later as the process of conditioning began and continued you could also express this 'being' verbally as 'I am' or 'I am so-and-so'.

This 'I am' or 'being' of yours you carry all your life and are even carrying it right now, at this very moment, and it has never left you. It is this pure 'being' or the 'I am' without any adjuncts that the Masters are telling you to get stabilized in.

When your body dies, this 'being' or 'I am' is still there, except that you cannot 'sense' or express it anymore as the combination of the five elements and three qualities does not permit it. The event called 'death' is just that, at that moment that particular combination cannot sustain life so dissolution is the rule.

Death, at the cellular level in fact sets in while you are in your mother's womb. A process called 'Apoptosis' or

'programmed cell death' acts like a chisel to carve out the shape of your body and its different organs.

At the cremation ground your body is laid on logs of wood and a fire is lit up. There are three 'beings' here, that of your body, the wood and the fire. All these soon disappear and all that only remains is the 'being' of the ashes. These ashes would soon scatter into the 'being' of the five elements.

If you are buried, then the 'being' of body and the 'being' of the coffin would disappear and soon merge into the 'being' of the earth. The process of decomposition may take time but would finally become earth only.

There may also then be the 'being' of a tombstone signifying your 'being' buried there. All this too would also finally disappear depending on the wear and tear through time.

Through all these processes you will observe that the 'being' is always there in some form or the other, it never leaves the scenario. This 'being' is impersonal, has no form and stands beyond time.

You just cannot do away with this 'being', you have no control over it in any way. You also soon realize that this 'being' is infinite, whatever finitude you perceive is only a temporal appearance in this eternal infinity.

This is the 'being' the Masters are pointing towards and it can be 'sensed' by you right now, at this very moment. If you can understand this 'being' or the 'I am' in its true perspective then it will also answer the question posed at the very beginning of this enquiry.

Where are you as an individual in this 'being'? You simply don't exist! Whatever you believe yourself to be as individual is only an ephemeral finitude which if at all has any value is only to realize your true infinite 'being' that never knows nor requires knowing itself.
