

## The Nectar of Immortality

Shortly before he died, the famous Advaitan guru talked with a visitor about meditation.

By SRI NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ

Visitor: I have read I Am That and came here on my own.

Maharaj: Have you read the whole book?

V: I have read the first part fully and the second partially.

M: Having read the book, did you come to your self at the witnessing state?

V: Yes, I understood but I do not feel it. I have no peace of mind.

M: Do you get an inkling as to how you are connected with your self?

V: A little bit.

M: Would you like to ask any questions?

V: Not many, but I shall be grateful if I am told how to bring peace to my mind.

M: Because of the self, the atman, you are connected to the world through the body. The self is nothing else but the knowledge that "you are." Meditate on that principle by which you know "you are" and on account of which you experience the world. Meditate on this knowledge "you are," which is the consciousness, and abide therein.

V: But the concentration is just not there.

M: Ignore the mind the way you disregard the crowd you encounter on the streets.

V: I shall try.

M: As a matter of fact, mind is a universal dynamic principle, but we restrict it to the limits of the body and then depend on it — hence all the trouble. Consider the water in Lake Tansa. That water belongs to the whole of Bombay. Out of that water, can we claim some as yours or mine? In a similar vein, understand that the self is universal. But you have conditioned it by confining it to the body; therefore, you face problems. This self is also termed Ishwara — God — the Universal Principle. If you hold on to that, profound knowledge will descend upon you and you will have peace.

V: I try to meditate on that, but the mind wanders here and there. If I try to remain indifferent to mind, it will be a long-drawn-out process.

M: But are you not the root of any process?

V: The root of everything is life.

M: Yes, but the life force is universal and not personalized. Once you realize this, you have no more troubles.

V: That is right, but when the mind goes astray I have trouble. Sometimes I feel that life is universal, but at moments it becomes individualized. How to get rid of this?

**M:** This is the conventional way of talking. The water is universal, use it when you possess it. Similarly, use the mind to meet your needs and then let it flow by itself without your interference and involvement, like the flow of a river from where you take water only when needed.

My talks are meant for intelligent people. [To a local visitor:] Why have you come? You will not understand these talks; you only sing bhajans in praise of God.

Why do I respect those foreign visitors? They are earnest seekers, in search of Truth, but they have not been able to locate it. I appreciate their sincerity and deep urge to understand.

**V:** They really go far. Any subject they take, they explore deeply into it.

**M:** Although the two of us talk here, in actuality they (the two entities) are not there. This is the theme today. At first, "no one" is. Instantly, one is, and then two. The subject of the talk is: How did these two reduce to one, and finally to nothing? Out of nothingness spontaneously the sense of beingness is felt — this is one. Later, when the sense of beingness knows "I am," duality begins. Then, after the duality has arisen, the sense of beingness identifies with the form, and so on. Actually to refer to the sense of being as "one," is not quite correct. Since in this state only the sense of being prevails, where is the need to say even "one"? With the appearance of otherness (duality), both no. 1 and no. 2 appear simultaneously. To say, "something is," "I" must be there first. If "I" am not, I cannot say "something is." So the fundamental principle in spirituality is that "I" must be there, before anything else can be. This "I" is the beingness which is first.

**V:** You said, in the beginning there is "one," and later there is "none."

**M:** When one looks into one's self, that is, when one abides in the Self, then there is "none."

**V:** Yet, when one merges, one remains.

**M:** To say that, is all right in common parlance, but actually it is nothing of the sort.

**V:** But you said that life is eternal, so life is there.

**M:** But not the life of an individual; it is the Absolute transcending the universal consciousness.

**V:** Life is eternal, that means life is there for ever.

**M:** Yes, life potential is always there. But unless a body-form is available, there cannot be any sense of perception. When the body drops dead, the senses do not function; therefore, no perception or knowing of the world takes place for that entity.

Only so long as the senses operate is perception and knowing of the world possible. So, in a way, the absence of sensory function is liberation. Isn't that correct?

At present, I am alive and my senses and reflexes react to situations. The senses and reflexes of a dead person do not react. In the manifested universe, when the capacity for sensory perception and motor function is created in a body form, only then is existence of a perceptible universe possible. The main point is that for a universe to exist, there must be an observer with sense organs in proper working order. The mind interprets the sense perceptions and concludes that the universe exists. Therefore, if the observer's sense organs and mind do not operate, then the observer's universe does not exist.

**V:** But the senses of seeing, hearing and touching etc. belong to the body and not to the self, the atman.

**M:** Without atman, the senses cannot function. But it resides in the quintessence of the body. When it subsides in itself, only nirguna remains — the non-qualitative Absolute.

**V:** The atman can change bodies.

**M:** The atman has no body, so how can it change? At present, it presumes that "I am" means body only.

**V:** In this materialistic world, when we say "we" we mean the body only. But if my legs are removed, they are apart from me. Therefore, I feel that I as such am not the body.

**M:** That is correct.

**V:** So atman is something other than body.

**M:** Atman is not the individual, this must be firmly grasped. Atman feels the sense of being only through a body with senses operating, otherwise the atman does not feel itself.

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