

Vaster Than Sky
Greater Than Space

Also by Mooji

The Mala of God

White Fire

Before I Am

Writing on Water

Breath of the Absolute

Vaster Than Sky Greater Than Space

what you are before you became

MOOJI



sounds true
BOULDER, COLORADO

Sounds True
Boulder, CO 80306

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Dedicated to
seekers of Truth everywhere
for the benefit of all
beings



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Introduction

VASTER THAN SKY, GREATER THAN SPACE arose from the inspiration to share Mooji's wisdom with those who are searching for lasting happiness, peace, and love—for Truth or what is often called Self-realization—but who may not be so familiar with self-inquiry or the nondual approach of *Advaita*. This way of looking into the truth of our existence is simple, direct, and powerful. However, it can appear complex and intimidating at first, because self-inquiry challenges our core beliefs and concepts regarding who we think we are and how we perceive the world we live in. Mooji often shares the story of when he first came across self-inquiry as taught by the Indian sage Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950), who is credited with the revival of this ancient spiritual wisdom.

“After a powerful experience with a Christian mystic in 1987, my life underwent many changes, inwardly and outwardly, which culminated with my giving up teaching art at the local college. One day I was drawn to enter a spiritual bookshop in central London. I was not accustomed to reading books, but I was instantly attracted to a picture of Sri Ramana Maharshi on the cover of one book. His face radiated a warmth and light that immediately touched my heart. However, when I

opened the book, my reaction was, *Whoa! What is this?!* His words felt very intellectual and noisy to me—so much so that I actually thought the printer must have made a mistake and put the wrong cover on the book. The picture emanated such profound serenity, silence, and peace, but the concise instructions of self-inquiry within couldn't enter my being back then.

So I closed Sri Ramana's book and put it aside. Instead, I found another book in the same shop entitled *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, which spoke to me immediately. Although I grew up in a Christian tradition, the wisdom of the Hindu saint Sri Ramakrishna was so universal that it touched and conquered my heart. His every word resonated deeply inside my being and was perfectly timed, as I had been waiting to find a voice that would confirm the profound experiences I had been having at the time. What I learned later was that Sri Ramakrishna was not only a great devotee—a *bhakti* saint—but also a completely liberated sage from the perspective and experience of the nondual *jnana* path—the path of pure self-knowledge.

In 1993, the urge and possibility arose for me to go to India. I thought the sole aim and purpose of my being in India was to visit Dakshineswar, the place near Kolkata where Sri Ramakrishna had lived and taught. I didn't know anything else. I had no *Lonely Planet* guide or anything of the sort. And I was quite spiritually naive back then—I knew nothing of gurus, spiritual paths, or meditation, and certainly nothing of Advaita. I only knew the divine love of Christ and Sri Ramakrishna.

Well, to this day, I still haven't made it to Kolkata. Instead, destiny's path brought me to meet my master, Sri H. W. L. Poonja, lovingly known as Papaji. And only through the grace and presence of Papaji, who is a direct disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi, was I somehow able to read and to understand Sri Ramana's teachings inside my heart.

What I came quickly to see and understand was that self-inquiry is the most direct approach to Truth. And it *had* to be direct, because I have a very short attention span and am only attracted to what is straightforward, immediate, and simple."

In the years that followed, people began to gather around Mooji. Some would simply approach and ask if they could sit with him for a while because they felt so peaceful in his presence. Others began to ask him questions related to their own search for Truth. The capacity to guide them arose spontaneously, and what began as small informal gatherings quickly grew into meetings, or *satsangs*, with hundreds of beings.

In early 2012, Mooji was sharing satsang in Tiruvannamalai, in southern India, with around 500 people. Among them was Abe Gutmann, an American from Colorado who was immediately inspired by Mooji's capacity to guide beings into the discovery of their true nature with such unsparing clarity, wisdom, and humor. Over the next four years, Abe shepherded *Vaster Than Sky*, *Greater Than Space* into life by selecting, transcribing, and editing the most potent transcripts of satsangs he attended both in person and online. During satsang, Abe frequently asked questions regarding relationships, psychology, and our place in

the world, because he felt that the answers to such questions would be well received by those new to satsang. This book came into being through Abe's dedication and persistence, which saw him restructuring the manuscript in response to feedback from Mooji and the Mooji Media Publications team.

In the summer of 2015, Mooji suggested that it was time for *Vaster Than Sky, Greater Than Space* to be finalized and released. With great synchronicity, as is ever present with a master, within days Abe received word that Sounds True was interested in publishing the book. The manuscript then underwent further revisions and refining by the Sounds True and Mooji Media teams, in consultation with Abe. This was a truly international coming together, with lengthy Skype editing sessions in early 2016 spanning Rishikesh (India), Monte Sahaja (Portugal), and New York City (USA). This process unfolded with grace and harmony during the five weeks of satsang with Mooji in Rishikesh, where more than 2,000 people attended—a beautiful reflection of Mooji's spirit and grace.

The book you are holding is the outcome of this collaboration. May it prove to be an invaluable guide to Self-realization through the unsparing light and wisdom of self-inquiry.

This is not a book to be read with the mind

The teachings and insights of Mooji are sublimely simple, and the place they lead us is beyond words. You don't need to learn any special techniques or practices, for self-inquiry is like looking into a mirror and recognizing your timeless face. However, as Mooji's own story shows, this introspection may at first be challenging, because it requires us to swiftly acclimatize to the language, potency, and immediacy of the pointings to the true Self.

Mooji uses language fluidly and metaphorically as clues to guide you into an inner, direct, and intuitive experience of the Truth you already are, yet are presently unaware of. As you read, don't get stuck on the precise meaning of individual words, sentences, or paragraphs. Instead, allow the energy of the words to enter your heart and being, without interference from the evaluating and interpreting mind, and you will find that, at some point, understanding just occurs naturally.

The main pointings are deliberately repeated in different ways throughout the book to offer space for this understanding to grow and ripen. The essential pointing to our true nature is simple and possible for everyone, including children, to grasp. However, it can take some time to empty and free our minds from the concepts we cherish about who we consider ourselves to be.

Although Mooji addresses many topics in this book, he actually only ever speaks about the discovery of our true nature. He often stresses that when seeking Truth, it is not important to know too many things. Therefore, the emphasis is placed not so much on teaching or learning, but on discovery and direct experience. If you encounter something that is not immediately clear or something that doesn't seem to make sense, don't be troubled about it. Let it be for now and remain open.

More important, when you do find something that resonates deeply, take some time just to be with that fully. Allow it to do its work internally. Mooji's encouragement to everyone is that one pointing, deeply understood and assimilated inside the heart, is enough to take you home.

Vaster Than Sky, Greater Than Space is rich in Mooji's wisdom and insights and is replete with the openness, love, and sense

of humor that Mooji exudes. It also contains many of Mooji's favorite teaching stories and clear self-inquiry guidance. It is structured in such a way as to guide those new to Mooji and his teachings into the direct recognition and experience of Truth. For those already familiar with these pointings, it offers the great opportunity to deepen into final understanding.

Part I, *Stepping into Oneness*, introduces Mooji's core teachings and insights. Chapter 1, in particular, conveys the essence of self-inquiry; as such, it is a chapter to be revisited again and again until one thoroughly understands self-inquiry and is able to use its power to attain final liberation.

Part II, *Life in Its Dynamic Expression*, is based on questions concerning our place in the world, relationships, family, work, difficulties in life, and so forth. While such matters are not usually the focus for Mooji, he addresses these topics because they arise for many—in particular, for those who are new to this profoundly simple way of looking into our timeless nature. As he steadfastly points us back to our source Being, Mooji demonstrates that Truth is highly practical and not separate from life. In fact, Truth enriches every aspect of the manifestation and the experiencing thereof.

Vaster Than Sky, Greater Than Space was compiled from living dialogues that are arranged by subject to make it easier for new readers to follow. However, this book should not be taken as a comprehensive view of Mooji's responses on any of these subjects. As a living master, Mooji responds spontaneously to the call of the moment, and as is the case with true masters, his approach may at times seem to be inconsistent and even contradictory. Remember here that he answers not only the question but also the questioner, as guided by his intuition.

The book is not overly structured in a way that would appeal to the logical, conditioned mind. Mooji knows and communicates with the deeper intelligence innate in every human being, and so, he credits each and every one with the capacity to awaken through recognition. He knows the value of learning, growing, and expanding when challenged to discover the all-encompassing Being we are.

“Very often in our culture, you are treated as though you have little spiritual capacity, as though you have no inherent power, and that people ‘in the know’ have to always liquidize your food in order for you to grow. But it is important that the true seeker understands that they must be open enough to be deeply challenged to awaken the living aspiration necessary for true freedom. To be free you are going to have to break out of the mold of personal conditioning, out of your cocoon. Each sincere seeker must be willing to undergo the necessary transformation from caterpillar consciousness to the butterfly of freedom!”

The Editors

The Greatness of Being

I WOULD LIKE to remind you of the greatness of Being, that all we ever need is to be found in the Self. All that we seek in this world that is truly lasting—true happiness, joy, peace, light, space—are inside of us. They are ever present, but for a while we don't see them because we search for fulfillment in the field of the ephemeral, the changeful. Only at the eleventh hour do we turn to the Self. Such procrastination is not wise, though it is common.

For thousands of years, human beings have been exploring the nature of who we are and the purpose of our being here on this planet. Many found what they were searching for, but billions of forms who were once called “people” are no longer here. They are gone. And now it is *our* turn—we are the living wave. We entered into manifestation to walk on this planet as contemporaries and to take our chance at finding that which is imperishable in us. All of us have this opportunity to find true freedom, and no one is exempt, no one is disqualified, because the light of consciousness burns in everyone.

The world encourages us to look from the limited sense of personhood—a very unstable standpoint from which we are always trying to find balance on very shaky ground. But you must learn to look from your source Being. Your Being is vaster than sky, greater than space—and it is already here. Look from

your stillness, not from your agitation. You don't have to go even a fraction of an inch away from where you are right now to find the silence and stillness of your Being. And from here you can observe the energetic streams that are pulling your attention to go out into the field of noise and personhood, where beings are suffering from person-poison, from the toxicity of ego.

You have picked up this book, and some power within you has brought you to find something deeper than you have found so far. And it is so simple! Begin by looking from the place of your stillness: it is already here. Don't combine yourself with any mode of time or any concept, and immediately you will find yourself in a realm of neutrality, spaciousness, and silence. Even if the tree of the mind is shaking furiously, that movement is watched from the place of stillness.

Learn to cultivate this habit of paying more attention to the stable sense of Being rather than to the agitated sense of *becoming*, because the becomings are unending. Get acquainted with the stability of Being; get used to the feeling of emptiness. It will not harm you. In fact, by so honoring your Self, you will come into a field of great joy, peace, love, trustworthiness, and aliveness. This is true self-respect. You will lose nothing from the world of activity—it will go better because you will no longer be wasting energy, and misconceptions will fall away. It is win-win all the way. I wonder why it takes us so long? Are the fruits of the world so sweet that they could compete with the beauty of your own Self?

This is a mighty existence, and it is beyond our human capacities to comprehend its full potential. But in the simple steps that are being pointed to here—of reverting the attention back to the place of stillness and silence within—we may realize that potential.


It is time to leave behind childish attitudes and begin to pay a little more attention to what is really here. This is a time-body, a mortal body, but an immortal presence is moving in it. While the body is still warm, use this bodily life to rediscover your timeless Being.

Mooji

PART I



Stepping into Oneness



Truth is what we are.
It is our essential nature and Being.
It is the pure Self, the limitless One,
the ultimate reality—it is awareness itself.
But we have become unaware
of the magnificence of our true nature
on account of our upbringing,
conditioning, and education,
which paint a very different picture of who we are
—and all of which we believe.

Is What You See All There Is?

MANY YEARS AGO in my school days, a boy showed me a small picture, a very simple black-and-white image just a bit larger than a postcard. He asked me, “What do you see?” I thought he was joking because it was so clearly a white vase on a black background. I asked, “What is this, a trick question?”

But he insisted, “*Really* look at it. What do you see?”

“It’s a white vase on a black background, plain and simple. No decoration, just the shape! Is there something more?”

“Yes, you are missing something because you are only looking in one way.” By now he was getting impatient, so he said, “Can you see the two faces? Look from the white to the black.”

Ah! Suddenly I could see that there were two identical faces looking at each other. Then he asked, “And the vase? Can you still see the vase?”

I hadn’t bothered about trying to see the vase again because I was still so excited to be seeing the faces. “No, I can’t see the vase! What happened to the vase?”

He tried to help me see, “Look at the picture. See the vase again!” I looked and looked, until again it was the vase. Then, all of a sudden, I could see both the vase and the faces simultaneously through just a slight shift of perspective and focus.

Obviously no change had occurred to the picture itself—the shift was only in my perception.

We all start out looking at life from the particular perspective of our upbringing, which provides us with assumptions about who we are. For most of us, this culturally imparted point of view simply remains our perspective as we move through life. There are seven billion people living on the face of the earth, but rare is that being who goes through life seeing more than the conditioned body-mind—only the vase—as who we essentially are. Very few question their belief in their identity or personality, and thus they miss the opportunity to realize their true nature.

Although the metaphor of the vase and the faces is a good illustration of how we perceive a limited reality based on our conditioning, it also falls short. The Truth that I am pointing to is beyond just being able to visualize from a new point of view and then from multiple perspectives. It is about discovering that there is a deeper reality to what we see and that reality is always here—we must simply come to recognize it as our very own Self.

Spirituality is the search for perfect understanding, for Self-discovery, for Truth, and it must take place right where you are. The Truth that you are searching for must already be right here, for it is timelessly present.

What is Truth? Truth can never be merely a holy cluster of concepts, conditioning, or beliefs. It is not an event, nor is it an object apart from you in some sacred vault. For Truth to be Truth, it must be unchanging, immutable, ever present—yet it is beyond characteristics and conditions. It cannot be anything that comes and goes, for everything changeful arises *from* it and comes and goes *in* it. Truth is what we are. It is our essential nature and Being. It is the pure Self, the limitless one, the ultimate reality—it is awareness itself. But we have become unaware of the magnificence of our true nature on account of our upbringing,

conditioning, and education, all of which paint a very different picture of who we are—and all of which we believe.

If you open your inner eyes, you will see the Truth that lies right here inside of you beyond the transient play of phenomena we call life—beyond everything we can see or perceive. When I say *beyond*, I don't mean beyond in terms of distance, but beyond in terms of subtlety. The search for Truth is not about running away from the things of this world but about understanding their ephemeral nature. And more than that, it is about discovering our true nature as an inherent stillness from where even the subtlest movements of phenomena are being perceived.

Those who discover that reality of their inmost Being enjoy a sense of peace, love, and wisdom as its natural perfume. They experience their essential nature as true freedom. Here you are invited into the direct experience of that timeless reality through the method of self-inquiry, which forms the essence of this book.

Seeing from our true position, our true Self, we come to understand that the appearance of any phenomenon doesn't mean it is true or real in and of itself. To discover the Truth, we need to look for the one who *sees* all phenomena—can that ultimate seer itself be seen?



What capacity, what power is present here inside of us that we are able to contemplate and inquire into our ultimate nature with such subtlety. This type of looking into the truth of our nature and Being is also called satsang, which means association with the highest Truth. Satsang comes in innumerable forms—sitting in the physical presence of a master, following

the guidance offered in a book such as this, working in the garden, playing with your children. Once you have the eyes to see it, every movement of life itself is satsang, calling you home to your limitless Being.

Welcome to satsang.

The Power of Self-Inquiry

In the traditional way of learning, during childhood we start simple in our knowledge; as we grow older, we become more complex. Now, as we search for Truth and turn the spotlight toward ourselves, we encounter much complexity initially, though we are in the process of evolving back into simplicity.

Some people say that realizing the Self is difficult. I am here to show you that, on the contrary, it is exquisitely natural and effortless. One might rightfully ask, “If self-inquiry is so direct, why don’t more people seem to discover the truth of who they are?” As I often say, Truth is simple, but the seeker of Truth is complex. We have been missing the obvious because we have been giving too much importance to what rises and falls inside our Being. This is like seeing only the waves while missing the ocean itself.

Truth *is* here, so let us take a look at what conceals it. This is the power of self-inquiry. What was hidden is quickly exposed. What is genuine is revealed. It is so immediate in its impact that all that is unreal is brought up to the surface quickly: we see what we are attached to, whether or not there is resistance to change, and we uncover the hideouts and cul-de-sacs of false identity.

Everything is presented in the here-and-now. In the energy field of satsang, what might have taken seven to ten years to

process is being compressed into two or three days. We get straight to the point. What need is there to advocate strenuous practices of such lengths of time when Truth is ever present as our very own Self? All that is required is that we recognize our real position as the ultimate witness—formless and immutable.



When I say that these pointings to the Truth are direct, I am not saying that satsang is like a shop where you come to buy enlightenment over the counter then go away all nice and shiny. Rather, even within presence, and even in the midst of the joy and freedom of Self-realization, a soft alertness or vigilance to the varying schemes of the psychological mind continues. And so, if something were to arise that seems to veil our true nature, it is easily detected. If there is any avoidance, cleverness, or pretense, it will swiftly be rooted out. You will know what is real and permanent and be able to distinguish that timeless nature from what is transient.

Some people are tired of practice, but *practice* should not be considered a dirty word. Self-inquiry is also a practice of sorts. Especially in the beginning, it requires steady determination, commitment, and a sense of responsibility to your own Self. However, such practice is not felt as a burden but rather as a way to keep your witnessing fresh.

So Calm

Once it happened that people came on a silent retreat with me on a small island in Ireland. One afternoon, we observed a group

of people taking a ride on the sea in a hovercraft. Because these crafts go very fast, skidding and bouncing hard on the surface of the ocean, the crew always straps you in tight. About eight or ten of us went for a ride. They had strapped us in carefully, and we had already enjoyed part of the ride sitting in silence. Then, while at full speed, everyone spontaneously started taking off their seatbelts to ride the waves standing up. The captain didn't even tell us to sit down and buckle up! When we came back to shore, we thanked him for the fantastic time.

The next day the captain showed up at satsang. I had just been telling everyone about the experience when I noticed him: "Ah, here is the captain himself."

Then he said, "I came because I take many people out on the sea, but I never see people this calm. When they were out on the water, everybody was so still, yet they were enjoying the whole experience. That is why I was not at all concerned when everybody started to stand up. So I wanted to see what this was all about."

There is something profound about being in satsang in the heart. It is not merely something mental, not just a pile of information. Somehow your heart comes and takes over your mind. It is almost as if you live life with a tongue-less spirituality that speaks for you even if you don't speak about it. Something shines from that inner core. That's why they called the Buddha "The Radiant One." It shines when you are free of your mind, free of past, free of intention, free of desire, free of identity.

Freeing Up Your Being

If someone were to interview you every six months for thirty or forty years, you would notice that what you had to say about yourself was different at each stage of life. You might also recognize that at each stage you were always convinced that your views were those of a stable entity, saying things like, “This is just how I am! You can’t change a leopard’s spots!”

One time you may say, “I strongly believe that we should be doing such-and-such,” and then several interviews later, “I strongly believe that we *shouldn’t* be doing such-and-such; we should be doing that other thing.” It’s such a changeful picture. Which of these identities is the real you?

If I were to ask you what your thoughts were at exactly 7:44 a.m. this morning, would you be able to recall them? No. We can’t even remember what we were thinking this morning, yet we tell stories from when we were fifteen years old and grant them great significance. We are often treading on the very shaky ground of memory, which can be highly distorted. But for the most part we remain unaware of this.

Even as we begin to examine our beliefs about ourselves more deeply and thus come to the moment where we recognize that they are false, we somehow remain convinced that we are the person we *think* we are at any given point in time. Despite recognizing the changeful and unstable nature of identity, we all too often continue to identify with the mind, which thrashes about in the time-bound realm, analyzing the past in an attempt to be better prepared for the future:

I said it this way, but I should have said it that way.

I knew I should not have done that—never again!

Why did I go? Why didn’t I go?

Everything we want to accomplish takes time. But what is it that takes no time and requires no effort? What is it that is not in the region of time? No need for clocks. There is neither day nor night here. A great spaciousness opens up and a sense of peace pervades your being when you find that you are this timeless, unchanging, untouched awareness within which all experiences arise. You intuitively know that you are in the right place inside your true Self. You recognize that these bubbles of thought—or indeed any phenomena—are not your essential Being; rather, they are generated by and held inside this great harmony or oneness that you are.

The Simplest Step

The step into oneness is the simplest step. You don't need a spiritual or religious background to take it. "Be in your natural state" is such a straightforward message that I can even share it with children. They respond well and are happy just to be in that feeling of being, not identifying with mental imagery or thoughts and without being located in time or confined to any particular shape. If you just stay like that, it eventually becomes effortless.

The state of presence—the sense 'I am' or 'I exist'—is natural for everyone. No one needed to teach you this. When this sense 'I am' combines itself or becomes associated with other states and ideas, it is as if those states become a part of what 'I am' is. But they are not original to who we are.

From a young age, we pick up many false assumptions about the world, about life, and about exactly who we are living life. The concept *I am the body* is the core belief we adopt very early on. Once we have accepted this basic *I am the body*

concept as who we are, other concepts can now pour on top of it: *I am a man or a woman. I am ambitious. I am lazy. I am interesting. I am intuitive. I am like this or that.* And so a unique psychological identity forms.

Mostly we assume that this identity is an unquestionable fact, and yet those acquired beliefs are not part of our original nature.

We take ourselves to be a particular body with a unique personality, and this perspective remains with us as we live our lives. Taking this

person-identity to be true, we perceive ourselves as a separate entity in a world of many other separate entities and objects.

You could write many pages on all the nuances of your personality: *I am this particular type of person; these are my tendencies, my dreams, my aspirations, my possessions; this is my experience, and these are my certificates to prove it.* But all that we refer to as being ours—our body, our mind, our emotions—is not what we are, essentially.

If this is too much to take in at once, let's break it down.

Everything you can perceive comes and goes, including your own body. You are the one looking at time, objects, and even thoughts and emotions. Through the senses, you are able to observe everything that is perceived as life, as manifestation, as existence. And behind the eyes—in the realm of thought, emotion, and memory—these are perceived with the eyes of inner perception. Your sense of being a particular person is also perceived.

Regardless of whether the object of perception is physical and can thus be measured for color, shape, and size, or whether

ALL THAT WE REFER TO AS
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what is being perceived is something more subtle like thought, feeling, and sensation, *all* are phenomena. It is the sense of ‘I’ that perceives them. First ‘I’ must be there. One can say it is the password into this mighty game of existence. Only after ‘I’ comes ‘you’ and ‘other’—world, friends, education, desire, religion, and so on.

So now the question must be asked: ‘I’ implies what? Who or what is ‘I’?

When questions like these are asked, don’t look for a verbal or mental answer, and don’t trust so much in the mind and learned knowledge. Rather, look inward and see what these words point to. The nondual wisdom of Advaita invites you to find out for yourself what ‘I’ really is—whether it is what you assume or imagine it to be.

Most people have a strong sense of being individuals and hold the conviction that they determine their own experiences and are familiar with their own realities. That may be true to an extent, but it is only a lesser, relative truth. The greater Truth is that you *are* the awareness within which the idea of yourself living a life and *having* awareness is appearing.

In other words, the ‘person’ we take ourselves to be is an idea emerging in consciousness as an expression of consciousness. This idea has other ideas about itself—for example, *I am a body that has consciousness and an independent life to live.*

Here is a joke that illustrates this confusion well: A man sitting in the doctor’s waiting room has a frog sticking out of the side of his head. When it’s his turn, the nurse accompanies him into the doctor’s office.

The doctor says to the man, “So, what’s going on here?”

The frog replies, “Well, Doc, it started out last week as a small lump on my bottom, and it just kept on growing bigger and bigger!”

Aren’t you surprised that the frog replied? So much in our lives is based on conditioned thinking that we insist on believing. What we have been brought up to believe is that we *have* consciousness. And I say no! At the level of the body-mind and the personality, we are the *product* and *expression* of consciousness.

But because of our cultural conditioning and inherited ways of thinking, all based upon the idea of *personhood*, this simple assertion I have just made—namely, that each of us, as a person, is the expression of consciousness rather than its creator or controller—seems illusory, evasive, and elusive. We insist that we just don’t get it. We may even experience a kind of nausea because we are not used to thinking like this.

We are accustomed to a certain way of thinking, but there are ways of understanding that bypass the personal thinking mind and are profound in their impact. Mind in its natural, intuitive function is a higher power than the personal mind mode. The natural mind operates in a much broader way. It is not obsessed with activity or identity. It is clean and clear, empty and fresh, so life simply unfolds. One stays in complete harmony without strain or effort. The natural mind is in a state of grace.

When you are established in and as the Self, whatever is going to happen will just spontaneously arise out of that oneness. If you study and learn as a person, you can only function as a person—maybe as a good person, a skilled person—but when you awaken to the Truth, you start moving as a whole environment. When something arises that needs to be done, that need is recognized, and a movement to fulfill it begins, and other

streams join in until it becomes a river. You see how the forces join together. Then you are actually looking at this whole matrix of life and seeing that it is the One doing it all. You're not merely thinking this—you are actually seeing it with God's eyes.

At this point, allow some space for understanding to happen without the interference of your logical mind. Your mind cannot take you there. Just be empty, without relating to any thought, intention, or identity. Like this, beyond mind's efforts, you stand a chance of discovering the naturalness of life and being.

We Only Think We Are the Body

Usually our experience of life is not, *I am consciousness!* Instead it is, *I am the body that has consciousness.* But let us take a moment to really look at this idea. It is not the body that says, *I'm aware of you.* The body hasn't said anything like that. The body makes various kinds of noises, but I don't think that it has written a book yet or made any grand statements. The body is innocent in all this. Rather, it is *you* who says, *I'm aware of the body.*

We are all living in time-bodies. From the birth of this body, each of us is like a candle that has been lit and is burning down throughout the course of our lives. And at some point, the flame of the body will go out. But *you* are not essentially the body, the senses, or the mind, because they all report to something that observes them.

Suppose you had parked your car outside and someone said, "There's a blue car with the lights left on." You would say, "Oh, that's *mine*," not, "That's *me*."

Similarly, we can say, “This is *my* body—it is not me because I am here to perceive it. I am looking at my hand. My hand is not looking at me.” My hand—not me.

“My eyesight used to be so good that I could read a license plate from a hundred yards, but now I can’t even see you.” My sight—not me.

“I used to believe this and I used to believe that, but now I gave up those beliefs.” My beliefs—not me.

“My memory used to be really sharp, but now I have trouble recalling what happened a few days ago.” My memory—not me.

A relationship collapses: “My life is over; no wife, no life.” My *life* is finished—not *me*.

So if you leave aside all these things that you say belong to you but are not *you*, everything else is seen as secondary to who you are. The true Self is primary.

What we are is consciousness. The body is the vehicle through which consciousness can taste experiencing. And in the human form, consciousness has the capacity and opportunity to realize its own source and thus come into a direct experience of this.

Currently there is a belief inside of you humming, *I am the body*. To discover our source Being, we must find out who or what that ‘I’ is. Is it really the body? The feeling *I am the body* is itself a thought. It might feel like a very deeply held conviction, but that doesn’t make it real.

I’m not asking you to get beyond this identification with the body just like that. No, leave aside the thought that you *are* the body or you *are not* the body. Just come to the point of recognition that something is here that is aware of the body and of everything else that arises for you. That very awareness that the body and the senses seem to report to is also aware of objects, of the sense of distance,

height, weight, of the sense of 'I' and 'otherness.' Everything is reporting to this essential inner perceiving principle, isn't it? But the awareness itself is not caught in the bubble of experiencing. It is your very own immeasurable Self.

Look, confirm, and be one with the awareness Self.



Following *I am the body* is the thought *I am the doer of actions*. This idea says to us, "If I am the doer of actions, then I'm responsible for the fruits of those actions. And I'm also going to be the one who suffers or enjoys the fruits of those actions." It seems obvious, in human conception, to accept this kind of logic. So we judge people based on the concept that they are the doers of actions and the thinkers of thoughts.

But those who have gone a bit more deeply into their own introspection have come to see that it's not quite true that we are independent entities so firmly in the driver's seat. The vital force, the animating power of the universe, is somehow moving in each body and activating even the movements of thoughts, sensations, and apparent decisions. All this is happening in the presence of the witnessing consciousness, which itself cannot be said to be a "happening."

Identification with the body is a state that consciousness needs to experience for a while. But eventually, grace will compel consciousness to transcend this severe limitation and guide it home to its original nature.

If you continue to look inward in this way you will start to see more clearly. Self-inquiry begins by looking to discover whether the personal identity, with all its conditioning and

idiosyncrasies, is who we truly are. And it ends as a mirror in which the timeless is reflected.



SELF-INQUIRY GUIDANCE

Stay as the ‘I Am’

We are all familiar with the sense of being. Without practicing anything, we spontaneously refer to ourselves as ‘I.’ Each person can confirm, *I am, I exist*.

Am means “to exist, to be.” The sense of existence is naturally present and feels totally comfortable. It is the beginning of perception, and it functions during the waking state as the effortless witness and observer of all that arises. This feeling *I am, I exist* is the natural untaught way through which we recognize our existence.

But who is the ‘I’ that *am*, the ‘I’ that exists? Let’s look together. The practice of self-inquiry is powerful enough to take you all the way from identification with the body to unshakable and lasting peace.

Start with the feeling *I exist*. It takes no time, for it is already naturally here before any thoughts arise. It is no distance from you, so you don’t have to go to it.

Don’t look for the ‘I am’—you *are* the ‘I am’! It is naturally here as consciousness. Just be self-aware.

Don’t let this natural feeling of presence combine with any other concept, thought, or intention. All intentions such as *I want to accomplish such-and-such, I hope this inquiry pans out, or I want to become enlightened* should be left aside. Stay with the vibration of presence—not merely the words, but the intuitive, subjective sense of being—*I am, I am here*. That’s all.

The mind may creep in and say, “Well, I don’t *see* anything; this isn’t working out,” and then it will mischievously start playing the usual distracting person-noise to draw away your attention. But you just remain in the sense of being, *I exist*. If the attention starts to drift off, don’t worry. Just bring the attention back to the simple ‘I am.’


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Practice this inquiry for short periods of about five to seven minutes at a time. You can do this with eyes open or closed,

while seated or while walking—it doesn’t matter. In the beginning, you may find it easier to just sit by yourself. Try to find a space and time when you are least likely to be disturbed, though this is not a condition or requirement. Remember: wherever you are, the sense of presence must be there. It is there without any effort at all. The fact

that you can know you are alive and awake is because the sense ‘I am’ or presence is there first.

Just focus on what this exercise is aiming at. Stay with the natural sense ‘I am,’ the feeling of being. In the beginning you may feel tired, as though you are having to make a great effort to keep this sense ‘I am’ from mixing with other thoughts. Other thoughts come and want to play, but do not engage them. Just be with the ‘I’ feeling.

Gradually, with a little practice, you will see that the sense ‘I am’ stays by itself, without intrusion, and you will start feeling a sense of expansiveness and peace. A natural feeling of wanting to stay more in this state will develop, but just start out like this, with brief periods of five to seven minutes of self-observation. 

The Fruits of Self-Inquiry

If you follow through with the inquiry with full heart and mind, then strong identification with the body and societal conditioning will change radically. That is a change in the idea of who ‘I’ am. It is a shift in orientation from being the conditioning, from *I am this body, I am this person, I am the son of so-and-so, the mother of so-and-so*, to being the witness, the one who is without belief systems, the one who is synonymous with the very ability to observe. You will arrive at the realization that you are just joy itself, and everything you do arises out of this joy, out of this spaciousness, light, and love. As the sense of personhood thins away, you begin to experience life more panoramically. At first, life, as seen by the personal mind, may seem real; you take yourself to be an individual ‘me’ making decisions and living your life accordingly. Then, you may come to see it as a play that is somehow unfolding effortlessly. And at a certain point, you will see it’s all just a kind of Is-ness.

These observations are not intended to mystify your mind, but to bring it into the complete simplicity of being. I may talk like this here, but when I’m moving about in my daily life, I’m not thinking about these things at all. I don’t lie in bed at night thinking, *Oh, yes, you know, the pure consciousness and the mind*. But I am compelled to talk about it while it remains unclear to those in search of the living Truth.

We think it is so important to maintain a certain way of behaving and speaking. But I say, no, there is ample room in my Being for watching some TV, for enjoying some reggae and the occasional soft drink. Why not? How can I step out of my own Being? There is no need to be especially religious. I don’t even have to be “spiritual.” There is nothing I have to be or do. I don’t

even have to be myself. For me, this is freedom, even beyond the concept of freedom. I am the immutable Self.

How simple life is until belief and identity are poured into the mind. A whole realm of mind that is naturally quite magical is instead invested with plenty of energy with which to manifest

I DON'T HAVE TO LIVE LIFE,
NOR DO I "HAVE" A LIFE
TO LIVE. I *AM* LIFE.

a mundane and limited personal existence. But beyond the cultured mind are higher and more refined ways of seeing: the realm of awakened being.

Here, everything enters into joy, light, and peace. I don't have to live life, nor do I "have" a life to live. I *am* life.

At a certain point, you will see that this body has never imposed any limitation upon what we are or upon what is. All of those limitations are only being dreamed. Everything—even apparent disharmony or difficulty—is this magnificent, magical consciousness. Everything is magical but also, somehow, seemingly ordinary. However, the liberated one dwells beyond this realm of duality as the untouched seer—unborn awareness.



SELF-INQUIRY GUIDANCE

You Are Nothing Perceivable

Anything that you perceive cannot be what you are.

Simply observe this internally until it becomes naturally confirmed in the mind. *You* are earlier than anything perceivable. Stay as the awareness of this. Observe that all thoughts and sensations, all phenomena, come and go in front of you.

Notice that you are already here before anything appears on that screen of consciousness. You perceive this effortlessly.

The computer is on but you don't log in. Simply look. You will feel an inner spaciousness opening up in the immensity of being. Let this be your exercise as you move about in daily life: keep your focus on the sense of being rather than on the appearances arising in the mind space.

Being in this state of presence will reveal inner strength and awareness. But you may find that your mind tries to escape from it. Just observe this tendency. In the beginning, the force of distractedness will feel difficult to resist because the attention has been accustomed to drifting toward mental activity and trivia.

As this tendency is noticed, greater understanding will emerge. By continuing with detached witnessing, the pull to escape will begin to weaken, and an increased sense of presence will be felt. You are at the very door of awakening. But be aware that the tendencies, habits, and deceitfulness of the psychological mind will not be so easily transcended.

It isn't that you have to suppress this energy of the mind. Rather, be in the witness state, with its natural, spacious, and omnipresent nature. It is your own true Self. Therefore, don't waste energy and time trying to control the mind. Just stay as the impersonal awareness.

As you watch, you will come to recognize that identity itself is just a thought, running from one story to another like a monkey jumping from branch to branch. In the past, it may have gone on for hours without you being able to catch it. But stay as awareness and you will find that your vibration is more open, loving, and free and that your consciousness is rising to a higher altitude. It will be much easier for you to catch the mind, because as soon as identity starts playing, an inner signal will light up, and you will quickly be able to recognize this play.

Now, this is very important: who or what is witnessing the playing out of this identity? Don't let the mind answer for you. Try to understand what is really being asked here. Don't be in a hurry; remain focused. Check in and verify the natural sense 'I am here.' As what are you here? You may respond, "I cannot say or see anything in particular. It's just a sense of being."

Keep returning to the *being* position. Develop the habit of observing from and as presence rather than as person. Through the state of presence, you will quickly grow in wisdom and intuitive insight. You will begin living in the high-altitude realm of presence, above the region of the psychological mind where the sense of personhood resides. Here the personal mind cannot breathe. It fades in its seeming power to influence the presence.

When the idea *I am the person* is sieved out, there remains just the 'I am' presence.


Allow time to marinate in this profound state of awareness-seeing-being. It is the *Satchitananda* state. *Sat* means existence, *chit* is consciousness, and *ananda* means pure joy or bliss. All beings love this divine state. The play of personhood emanated from it and is sustained by it for a while, until there arises sufficient maturity in personhood to merge back into presence. All this is the divine play—the *maya*, or play of God.

Beyond Presence

At the appropriate time, further maturing occurs to the presence. A realization may arise inside the being: the 'I am' is also seen, the 'I am' is also perceived. The sense of presence is also felt. A deeper space is intuitively felt, beyond presence; it is totally nonphenomenal. This maturing is also the action of grace and cannot be understood by the mind. Don't be in a hurry for this.

To come to the sense of just the unmixed presence is already tremendous. You are in the field of grace.

Remember, the presence 'I am' is the Godly principle. 'I am' is the Christ light, the Shiva being, the Krishna consciousness. It cannot be dispelled as mere illusion. It is the active God-Self, the dynamic expression of absolute awareness. Without it, there can be no experiencing, nor can there be the realization of the Self.

The Absolute is not revealed through human effort. At the appointed time, presence simply begins merging in it. If you try to force this, you will bring the mind and person in again. It will seem as though the mind has accomplished something tremendous, but it will be a fake realization, a mere mental state. 

Apply yourself fully to the introspection offered here. It is good for all seekers. As you deepen in the inquiry, you naturally find that the inquiry is happening, that life is unfolding, but you are not charting your movements or measuring yourself against the phenomena arising as mind. Everything is fresh, and the attention no longer strays as before; it remains easily one with immutable Being.

This self-inquiry is your internal work. Internal work—eternal satisfaction. Internal work revealing timeless Self.

You have tried it the hard way . . .
now try it the heart's way,
the effortless way, for a while.

I have not come to burden you
but rather to free you of the notion
that you need to do anything to be your Self.

The Divine is not even an inch away from you.
It can never be apart from you.
It is the core of your very Being.

