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EDITOR'S NOTE

The material presented here is based upon notes taken by Shri Dinkar Kshirsagar while attending the daily gatherings at the residence of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj. This was done during the period 1977-79, before Maharaj passed away in 1981.

Maharaj used to conduct morning and afternoon talks, mostly in a question-answer form, with the translator sitting next to him. A small group would also join him in meditation at 6:30 in the morning. Additionally, there was a small gathering later in the evening with the conversation being conducted in Marathi. Shri Dinkar usually attended the gatherings on Thursday and Sunday in the evening, as well as on holidays. Marathi being his mother tongue, it was easier for him to directly follow Maharaj's words. He wrote down the poignant Marathi sentences verbatim. As a result, we are fortunate to have a direct and accurate record.

The daily notes are titled *Nirupanas*. The word means 'investigating', 'defining', 'searching', etc. Maharaj says: *'To tell you about your true nature as to what it is and how it is, is the meaning of the word Nirupana.'*

Towards the end of his life, Maharaj preferred to emphasize on the core teaching and not dwell on peripheral topics. He used to say that what was being discussed at that time was different from the earlier dialogs documented in *I Am That*.

These notes were looked at by Maharaj and he encouraged distribution of the same. The sentences are mostly left as spoken, without rearrangement.

I consider the Nirupanas as passages for meditation. That is their purpose and that is where they lead. They may seem to be repetitive, yet there is a different nuance to them almost every time you read them. Consequently, this is not a book one would read perhaps in one sitting. One should rather read a passage at random and meditate on the same. It will tear away all your internal and external covers and leave your innermost core bare, with no support and ultimately no concepts, method or system to cling onto. At its foundation, of course, are the non-dual teachings of Vedanta or similar schools of thought.

Its uniqueness is that here it comes to us from an enlightened master's direct experience expressed spontaneously.

We owe the first attempted translation of these notes to Mrs. Damayantie Doongaji Ph.D., one of the senior disciples. She forwarded hand-written texts to her friend Jean Dunn in the mid-1990s. Jean had already published several books on the teachings by this time. She in turn asked me to take on the task of editing. Subsequently, Shri Dinkar revised the first translation and I re-edited the same through several iterations. I eventually verified

it against the Marathi notes – one sentence at a time. My small regret is that it has taken a long time to bring this effort to fruition.

It is difficult to translate the original words (Sanskrit as well as colloquial Marathi) into English, as exact equivalents do not exist. This being the case, readers who are familiar with them will be able to interpret the equivalents with the right contextual meaning. There are plenty of precedents to this, of course. Then again, what we have here is inexpressible in words, as such. It is presented in known languages with their fundamental limitations. Sometimes, they are pointed out or explicit; sometimes they are implied.

Also, many a time the same words are used to express a different meaning or interpretation. For example, the word 'consciousness' has been used as *prana* – the life force; as awareness; as knowingness; as 'self'; or, as the ultimate root of manifestation that is *Brahman*. Hence, the context is very important.

I had the good fortune of attending Maharaj's talks in the summer and monsoon of 1979, when I lived in Mumbai.

During a visit to Sri Ramanasramam in Tiruvannamalai, a year earlier, someone had given me Maharaj's address. Later, when I read an article by Jean Dunn in *The Mountain Path* – the Asramam's magazine, I decided to go visit him.

It is impossible to second-guess how, why, and when things happen.

As I reflect back on those visits, the most poignant feeling that arises is a sense of grace. He did not call

himself a Guru. And yet, I believe, if you were 'initiated' you somehow experienced it. It seemed that he did not form an image of you as such. He rarely called people by their names. It was as if we had no names. His mind did not seem to record the meetings.

Somehow, the questions one had and were never verbalized were answered during the flow of the session. It was as if divinity was playing its role but there was no player, so to speak. Once in a while, he would look at you and ask you what the question was. His primary advice was to regularly meditate on the sense 'I am'.

After a few months, when I told him I was going back to USA, his only comment was: 'You have to pass the time somehow'. When I asked if I would see him again, he gave a look that suggested he did not like such questions. Then he said I would see him. It so happened that I had to make a quick trip back to India less than a year-and-a-half later and he graced me with a meeting. Eight months later, he passed away.

A few quotations from the Nirupanas have been presented in an earlier pictorial book *The Wisdom Teachings of Nisargadatta Maharaj*, published by Inner Directions in 2003.

I am grateful to Shri Dinkar for allowing me to edit his painstaking notes and publish the same. I am also thankful to late Damayantie Doongaji for initiating this, and my friends and mentors late Jean Dunn and Saumitra K. Mullarpattan for guidance and encouragement. The latter had asked me to contact Gautam Sachdeva of Yogi Impressions for publishing the same.

I am thankful to him for making it happen. I also must thank him and his team for a careful, thorough and extensive review of the text for syntax, punctuation and consistency.

Gautam's firm has earlier published three books on Maharaj, and he has himself been deeply inspired by the Teaching. He has captured the 'essence' of this book in a short video that can be viewed on YouTube: <http://youtu.be/NaIvHDpbFqM> or <http://tinyurl.com/MaharajBook1>

– Suresh N. Mehta
Pleasanton, CA
June 23, 2014

INTRODUCTION

The earliest Indian scriptures, the Vedas, are some of the oldest texts in the history of the world, mostly composed during the Bronze Age. Vedas primarily dealt with the material and non-material aspects of life. As the sages turned their attention inwards to study consciousness, the revelations that they received helped them compose the Upanishads. They are a record of their insights. The foundation of Indian spiritual thought can, largely, be traced to these compositions.

The sages realized that to understand the mind and make it steady, purity of thought and concentration were necessary. Towards this goal, they prescribed certain spiritual practices. These were broadly classified as *Bhakti* yoga (yoga of devotion), *Karma* yoga (yoga of righteous action), and *Jnana* yoga (yoga of self-discovery).

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj was a jnana yogi. In 1932, his Guru Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj explained what the true nature of man was and asked him to meditate on the same. Nisargadatta Maharaj followed this very

diligently and within three years had an unshakable insight: his Self-realization.

Maharaj spent nearly 50 years sharing his insights with all sincere seekers. People from all over the world came to his residence that was in a narrow lane of Mumbai. Their queries were answered and elaborated upon, appropriate for the enquirer's state of mind. For a Self-realized sage, this process occurs without any deliberation and is spontaneous.

The nature of the human mind is to identify with the body; its name and form, consciously and unconsciously. This identification does not allow us to reach our formless, attribute-less Self – the *Atman* – which is pure consciousness. A jnana yogi contemplates on this after intense study, and realizes the same. This is called the 'direct path'. It may be compared to the path of the bird that flies directly to the top. This is the first part of the spiritual search.

After this, the seeker meditates and gains knowledge of the pure consciousness. He then understands how it rises, sustains and sets. This understanding leads to ultimate liberation.

A realized sage is called *Sadguru* – one who has realized the emergence, sustenance and dissolution of His own consciousness. He in turn introduces it to the seeker and initiates him.

In the absence of a master, the Self as 'pure consciousness' is also called *Sadguru*.

Maharaj explained *sadhana*, spiritual practice, as follows:

Listening: Paying close attention to the teaching of the Sadguru invariably brings change. This is exemplified in the dialog between Sri Krishna and Arjuna as described in the Gita. Arjuna listened carefully even while fighting a war, and was liberated. There is no need to listen once the change is complete.

Bhajans: The *chitta* (inner mind) is purified by the words and singing of devotional songs. Worldly thoughts are at abeyance at such time. For some people this is the best practice.

Chanting: Silently reciting the name of a chosen deity, or a *mantra* (secret set of words given by a Guru), while paying attention to the breath. A mantra is usually given during the initiation of a seeker. Since mind and breath are closely related, prana – the life force, is thus purified. The mantra gets personified. This leads to dissolution of the mind and results in a state of *samadhi* (yogic inner trance).

The sage Valmiki, who was once a bandit, recited the mantra given to him by Narada, the messenger of the gods. By doing so, he transformed himself and wrote the magnificent epic Ramayana. Purification of prana may lead to spiritual powers that are inherent to pure consciousness. A *jnani* (realized being) generally refrains from using them.

Meditation: For purification of the mind, *dhyana* or meditation, is the best practice. After waking up and before going to bed, meditate for half an hour. This is what Maharaj used to prescribe: Sit steady with the back erect. Contemplate on: ‘I am not the body. I am formless. I am self-illuminated, pure consciousness’.

Remain aware of pure consciousness without words till you forget yourself while still awake. Do not visualize any deity, or chant any name. Just 'TO BE' and to remain steady with the awareness 'I AM' is the beginning and end of spiritual practice.

Maharaj has given further spiritual advice: 'The search for happiness is the cause of suffering'. The world is a repository of desire and fear. True detachment brings peace. The anxiety of 'what will happen to me?' is removed by detachment.

Our self-image, our ego, is strengthened by aspirations. Hence, one is advised to cast-off personal aspirations. The end of searching is ultimately the advent of Self-realization, which is timeless.

The sense 'I am' is always in the present moment. Eternity is in the present moment. We miss this because our mind wanders between the past and the future. One must understand that nothing exists which one should fear.

Consciousness and the world appear together and disappear together. They are two sides of the same coin. The world exists till the mind exists. The world comes into being with the birth of the body. Realize that the world is within you and not you in the world.

Maharaj says: 'From your point of view, you are born and you will die. From my point of view, the world appears and then disappears'. One cannot change the world, but one can change oneself and become free from desire and fear.

Meeting a Sadguru is the most precious thing in the life of a seeker. The sense of restlessness for the seeker, the divine dissatisfaction, is a benediction from the Guru.

The seeker needs to follow the teaching with love and faith. Do not see the Guru as a physical person. To follow his teaching earnestly is of the greatest importance.

I first met Maharaj on 14th May 1977. Two days later he gave me initiation. I usually visited him on Thursday and Sunday evenings. The first six months were very difficult for me as what I heard was different from my traditional knowledge, and this led to a conflict. Maharaj taught that there was nothing to attain or nothing to lose, but to understand, not intellectually but actually, the rising and dissolution of consciousness and its relationship with the world.

I started to write down important sentences so I could ruminate over them later. These formed the basis of the Nirupanas.

Maharaj was neither a preacher, nor a philosopher, nor a missionary. He spoke from his own direct experience, in his simple language. He used to say that if you take a few sentences and ruminate over them constantly, you will be free.

I was fortunate to be in the holy presence of Maharaj for four years, up to the last day of his physical existence.

May the passages on the following pages lead you to the Truth.

It is inevitable they will.

– Dinkar Kshirsagar

THE
NIRUPANAS



Nirupana 1

Sunday, November 27, 1977

All worldly activities are being done for the sake of entertainment of the consciousness of every living being.

The quality of the fruit depends upon the quality of the seed. Hence, it is important to listen to good things.

What is seen is the reflection of the seer's own consciousness. The pervader (you, as consciousness) and the pervaded (the manifest universe) are not different; they are one and the same. That through which space is created is within us. Mind has neither birth nor death. Mind means the speech (thoughts). The mind becomes silent when the word-flow ceases. The word comes from space, mind comes through the word, and your behavior depends upon your mind. (From this perspective, the first sound-word is OM which symbolizes the manifestation – the first vibration. The mind is formed from the words thereon.) In fact, *you* are not the doer.

You wear clothes but you do not say, 'I am the clothes'. Similarly, learn to say, 'I am not the body'. Your form is of the nature of space.

(In this discourse Maharaj is telling us to go back to our Source. When we get up in the morning, the first to appear is the seed consciousness, just a feeling of our beingness. In a few seconds, this seed consciousness expands and space comes into existence. In this space everything is seen, including our own body. This has been happening every day from our childhood. Since then, we have identified ourselves with the body. This deep-rooted impression cannot be dismissed without the guidance of an

enlightened Guru. The Guru asks us to go inwards by saying, 'I am not the body. I am consciousness within the body'.)



Nirupana 2

Thursday, December 1, 1977

Brahman (the manifestation) is eternal. However, even the concept 'I am Lord Vishnu' does not last. What does that mean? Can the meaning be understood through austerities? It can only be understood through right discrimination. (Maharaj points out that Vishnu may be the supreme One, but when He sleeps, He forgets everything including His own name. As long as one regards oneself as a body, even if one is an incarnation, one cannot remain in his true state of being.)

To keep in mind what is heard is meditation.

What was done in childhood was true, what was done in youth was true, and what was done in old age was also true; but finally one must realize that it was altogether false (as it passed away with time).

Liberation means being free. It is freedom from our own concepts, from the bondage of our mind, intellect and imagination. The Self is free from the concept, 'I want to be' and requires no liberation.

One who has recognized the source of mind and intellect remains free from the resulting harassment. They arise out of body-consciousness.

Parabrahman (Absolute) does not belong to any organization. All cults are concepts and all concepts are incomplete.

What is the Guru-word? It is: 'You are not the body, you are consciousness in the body'. Hold onto this.

Time will end, but you will never end. One who says 'I am the body' will never understand this.

When there is no time, there is no world. (This time is not by the clock. Maharaj says time starts with the birth of the person. It is not the child, but it is time that is born. So, the world is there as long as you are.)

You know that 'you are'. That is the misery. Consciousness in the body is the reason why everything is seen. This subtle self-sensation is the Guru. Always remember this. That is meditation. Even if the pure sense of beingness is not held consciously in the mind, it is always there. The experience of time disappears along with the world, just like the ending of a dream. One who witnesses the dissolution of the universe is certainly prior to it. The situation is like that of a sleeping man witnessing a dream.

You will get time for spirituality only when your mind is silent. For this, concentrate on the goal. Krishna says: 'That, through which the world is known, is My nature as well as yours'.

Maya is difficult to grasp. She blocks the path to Self-realization, unless there is devotion to the Guru. Practice non-dual devotion. Catch hold of the knowledge 'I am'. (Here, Guru is not a physical person; it is your pure consciousness. It is also called jnana. The common meaning of maya is delusion. The root-maya is your seed-consciousness.)

By adhering to the Guru's word, you will grow spiritually and be happy in household life as well.

It is said that there are three *gunas* (qualities). Really speaking there is only one *guna* – *Sattva guna* – pure consciousness. When it takes up doership, it is *Tamo guna*. When it is active, it is *Rajo guna*. The presence of these *gunas* is known through worldly dealings.



Nirupana 3

A Compilation

(This Nirupana is a collection of sentences compiled over a period of time. They represent a unique self-assertion of an enlightened person. Generally, Maharaj did not talk about himself.)

“My identity is beyond description. I have no use for myself. Others may find me useful depending on their faith. The eternal Truth, Parabrahman, is always with me. The accumulated experience of 81 years is the only obstacle that has come over me. When I am beyond my sense of ‘I am’, how can I commit a sin or a virtuous act?”

“I have seen the existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*) in its naked form; hence I talk like this. Parabrahman – the unmanifest, is guiding Brahman – the manifest. I am not talking to a person as a person. I am talking to pure consciousness, not the body. As you listen while identified to the body-form, you do not understand this.”

“I accepted what my Guru taught me; no other advice. Due to maya, I felt that ‘I am’, which was not prior to

maya. When I realized this mistake, I knew I was always there, but without knowingness.”

“I am fully aware that the devotee is not different from me. I am not talking to the individual but to consciousness and the love within it. We have an eternal friendship, only if you keep it up. The difference between you and I is gone. The sense of individuality is replaced with a sense of the totality. Now, death has become of the nature of the Absolute.”

“My answers to your questions come up spontaneously. I do not think over them.”

“My birth is the birth of the world. The Source of my speech is the golden womb (*Hiranya Garbha*) through which the world is created.”

“Here, the word is replying to the word. However, I am outside the word. In my identity, there is no light, no darkness, no ‘I’ nor ‘you’. Who will recognize me in my unmanifested state? I can be known when the knower himself is dissolved. When the passions are silent, there is no urge to go outside. I am the witness of ‘beingness’ and the ‘non-beingness’.”

“I am giving you the knowledge of my true nature. Listen to the same as if it is your own. By the grace of the Guru, I have undergone Self-realization. As I have known my true nature, the great scholars cannot compete with me in arguments. Rich people, highly educated people and dignitaries come to meet me. I behave with them just as I would with anyone. I know why and how one feels that ‘he is’. Therefore I see no difference between big and small. I see no difference between God and the devotee. You will not understand this without discrimination.”

“I was convinced that I had attained a lot of knowledge and I was also convinced that I had attained no knowledge at all. All these are seasonal concepts. I have undergone all the yogic experiences. I have washed them off, as there is no real greatness in spiritual powers. You must know that I praise consciousness and condemn it as well. People are bothered by their memories. I have baked myself and I have eaten myself up.”

“The sensation of beingness is a matter of experience, but I am beyond that. Some people claim that they have memories of past lives. I do not have even the experience of myself at anytime.”

“No specimen of my individuality will be found in the world. I am only the totality. A life of an extra 100 years will be of no use to a person like me. I have disappeared with negation. I have no use of my beingness. I am desireless Parabrahman. You are listening to me while treating yourself as the body, hence this is not affecting you. My saying and your understanding should be reconciled.”

“You may not be able to endure what I will say from now on. Therefore I ask you to leave. I have no use of myself. But for you, I will be available anywhere according to your faith. My form will depend upon your concept. You will meet me according to your concept.”

The following are the last words of Maharaj before he lost his voice:

“I feel the pain in the body but I have no pain of dying. What has manifested is not ‘I’. I am That which is always there and which is prior to manifestation. I am not consciousness; on the contrary, consciousness is a nuisance to me.”