

Presence-Awareness:  
Just This and Nothing Else

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## Just This and Nothing Else

Talks with 'Sailor' Bob Adamson

Edited by John Wheeler

NON-DUALITY PRESS

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## Preface

The dialogues contained in this book are a testimony to ‘Sailor’ Bob Adamson’s wisdom and clarity in action. Bob’s words always go straight to the heart of matter. They are an uncompromising and direct pointing to the fact of our own being. His words are filled with warmth, energy, clarity and humour. His teaching is the essential message of non-duality presented in the most direct and clear terms. Bob is a rare treasure. For years, he has been one of the best kept ‘open secrets’ in the world of contemporary spirituality. Following the publication of his first book *What’s Wrong with Right Now, Unless You Think About It?*, a growing number of seekers have been drawn to ‘Sailor’ Bob Adamson and his message.

I am privileged to be able to help bring out this second book of dialogues. I would like to express my appreciation to Julian Noyce of Non-Duality Press for his support in coordinating the layout and final editing of the book.

You will not find a more profound pointing to your real nature than what is contained in these pages.

*John Wheeler*  
*Santa Cruz, California*  
*August, 2004*

# 1. The Fact of Your Own Being

Bob: If you are seeking truth, reality, God (or whatever you like to call it) then start with the only reality you are absolutely certain of. That is the fact of your own being. Under no circumstances can you say you are not. The fact of your own being is the only thing you are absolutely sure of. That expresses through the mind as the thought 'I am'. You know that you are, and you say 'I am'. But that thought 'I am' is not the reality. It is only a thought. What it is expressing is that sense of presence, that knowing that you are, that awareness of being present right now. That knowingness is expressing through the mind as the thought 'I am'.

We base what we talk about here upon what the ancient traditions tell us. For instance, in Hinduism, they say that God or reality is nondual, meaning that it is one-without-a-second. There is nothing other than that. In the Dzogchen scriptures of Buddhism (Dzogchen is the ultimate Buddhism), they say it is 'non-conceptual, self-shining, ever-fresh presence-awareness, just this and nothing else'. All the traditions somewhere along the line will tell you, when speaking about reality, that it is omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. Omnipresence means pure and total presence, or all-presence. Omniscience means pure and total knowing, or all-knowing. Omnipotence means pure and total power, or all-power. 'All' means that it doesn't leave room for me, you or anything else. It is all that. That is why we say that what you are seeking you already are.

The search itself becomes a problem from that point of view. The search implies that you are going to get something that you haven't already got. That implies that if you haven't already got it, you are thinking of some future time in which you will be able to get it. But it is omnipresence! It is only now-ness or presence. If you can grasp that and

understand that, you will see that any search for it is futile. You will not find something at some future time, because there is no future time. If you have a look at that, you can see it quite clearly. You have got memory, which is the past; and you have got anticipation or imagination, which is about the future. What memory have you got right now if you are not thinking about it?

*Q: Without thinking about it, what is the first thing that comes to mind?*

Bob: No. Have you got a memory if you are not thinking about it?

*Q: Well, no, I don't.*

Bob: Can you anticipate or imagine a future without thought? When you are thinking about the past, the actual thinking is happening now, presently; and when you are anticipating or imagining the future, the actual thinking is happening presently. So, you really haven't moved into the past, or you haven't moved into the future, though we think we have. We are so conditioned to go along with the fluctuations of the mind that we think we are in the past or in the future. But the actual thinking is all the time going on presently. This is the actuality. The actual livingness is going on in this moment. You can't live a moment ago. You can recall it, but if you recall it, it is recalled presently. It is no longer the past. It is a fresh recollection happening now. Or you can imagine the future, but you can't live in the future. Someone might say, 'I was in the past' or 'I was way ahead in the future'. But that is only in the mind, only in the thought, not in the actuality.

That is why we say that what you are seeking you already are. You can't be anything other than that, really.

## 2. What is the Cause of Our Problems?

Bob: What is the cause of our problems? When we have a look at our problems, they all start from the belief in that separate entity, the idea that we are separate, a person, an entity. That comes about when we are about two or two and a half years old, when we start to reason. A little child, prior to that, is just living from the natural state, which is the primal mind, the natural mind. For example, you can take a little child, put him in front of a mirror and daub his face with paint and different colours. He will not know it's himself! He'll see the face, but he hasn't realised that 'That is me' at that stage. There is awareness there. He is aware of the reflection in the mirror and what it looks like, but there is no self-awareness there at that stage. The self-awareness comes upon us at about two and a half years old, when we start to reason. When we look at the mind, you will see how that happens.

I use the word intelligence-energy, rather than 'God' or 'spiritual' or whatever because everybody has got a different belief, religion or concept about God. When they try to align this with their concepts it doesn't add up in all cases. It all depends on what their concept is. Intelligence-energy is what functions this universe. The stars in their orbit, the earth going around the sun, the tides coming in and out, the seasons coming and going—all of this implies that there is an intelligence. The movement of all those things implies energy. That intelligence-energy is the same intelligence-energy that is beating your heart right now, breathing you, growing your hair and your fingernails, replacing the cells in your body and digesting your food. It is doing all those things effortlessly. There is no 'me' saying, 'I have got to digest my food' or 'I have got to take the next breath' or 'I have got to make sure my heart expands and contracts'. It is all happening naturally. It is only at about two and a half

years of age that the 'I' thought comes upon us.

Look at thought. You will see that thought is subtle word. Words are sound. Sound is a vibration. So, vibration is only a movement of energy also. Take this body. This body can be broken down into the elements; it is made up of the elements. Earth is the flesh and bone. Air, which we breathe, provides the chi or prana (energy). Fire is the heat in the body that is keeping it going. Water: the body is about eighty percent water. Space: there is plenty of space in between the cells and everywhere else in this body. So, the body is nothing but the elements. They, in turn, can be broken down into subatomic particles and into just that pure intelligence-energy. It is just the same as this chair. It is seemingly a solid piece of furniture. But it can be broken down into subatomic particles that are whirling around at a terrific speed. So, it can all be broken down into that one intelligence-energy.

Have a look at your thought, and see how it is functioning. It is always functioning in the inter-related opposites. It is either in the past, which is memory, or it is in the future, which is anticipation or imagination. Within that range, it is constantly functioning in the opposites, good/bad, pleasant/painful, happy/sad, loving/hating, positive/negative. These are all relative to that reference point, that image that we have about ourselves.

When the 'I' thought comes upon us then there arises the opposite to 'I', which is 'not I' or 'other than I'. If there is something that you think is not I, well, you feel separate from that. You say, 'That is not I or not me'. There is a sense of separation. With that sense of separation comes insecurity and vulnerability. From that time on, we are seeking to be secure and less vulnerable. That is really when the search starts. It is not a so-called 'spiritual search' at that stage. It is a search to acquire, to become whole, complete, secure and less vulnerable. We are conditioned to look 'out there'. To start off, the little child wants a warm, loving family around it. If it has got a warm loving family, it will feel much more secure and less vulnerable. Families form

into tribes. In the old days they used to call them tribes. The bigger and stronger my tribe is, the more secure I'll be, and the less vulnerable. Today nations form into nations, and nations fight with nations because of that sense of insecurity and vulnerability.

### 3. You are Being Lived

Bob: The man with the book open, all ready to go!

*Q: In the book here, at one point there is a question: 'But the nature of thought affects the activity of the world'. You say, 'Exactly'. Then the questioner says, 'So, this means that your life and what happens depends on your awareness?' You say, 'Yes, in other words, you are being lived'.*

Bob: Yes?

*Q: I think my question comes from a mind that is still trying to understand. But thoughts seem to have an effect on our actions.*

Bob: Yes?

*Q: So thoughts, well, let's say there are ignorant thoughts. Let's say the thoughts are, 'I'm just going to fail and not get the job'. That has an effect on your confidence when you are sitting in the interview and you don't get the job.*

Bob: Yes?

*Q: Then those thoughts have affected that action.*

Bob: Yes. So, who thinks they are thinking that thought, 'I am just going to fail'? All your problems arise from that idea of a separate entity.

*Q: Yes.*

Bob: The energy just goes into that belief. It does affect it from that point of view, doesn't it?

*Q: Thoughts arise from the belief in that self-centre?*

Bob: No! Thoughts arise.

*Q: Problems arise?*

Bob: Yes, all problems are problems from the idea of a separate entity.

*Q: So, are all successes problems?*

Bob: If you think you have had a success! It all comes back to whether or not you believe yourself to be that separate entity. If you say 'I'm positive' or 'I'm successful', it is the same as if you are saying 'I'm failing' or 'I can't do it'.

*Q: I think I'm obsessed with keeping myself, the sense of self, and turning it from negative to positive, rather than questioning the very sense of self.*

Bob: Yes. But what can keep it, and what can turn it? You have got to understand: it is one-without-a-second. Basically, it is one-without-a-second, nondual. Now, from that point of view, is there anyone or anything that can turn it or alter it or modify it or correct it in any way? Even the thought itself must be that also.

*Q: There seems to be something that can turn it.*

Bob: (*Laughing*) You are just a dreamer trying to change the dream, from that point of view!

*Q: Yes.*

Bob: What value is that?

*Q: But, hang on: at some point the cloud, the hypnosis, comes over the mind, and we believe ourselves to be separate. At some point in life, seeking occurs for that seemingly separate entity.*

*Then an understanding arises, and they are no longer in bondage to that.*

Bob: What is all that you are talking about?

*Q: That is the intelligence-energy.*

Bob: No. What is all that you are describing? You are saying 'at some point, at some point, at some point'.

*Q: It is the future.*

Bob: Yes. So, where are you? You are in the imaginary concept of time!

*Q: Yes.*

Bob: What is time?

*Q: Time is ... mind.*

Bob: Mind! So, it is all mind stuff.

*Q: But there is a perception of being in a cage, of suffering. You read these books. Sometimes you almost touch this freedom where there is no suffering.*

Bob: There is a perception of the blue sky. There is a perception of the blue sea.

*Q: Right.*

Bob: But are they that?

*Q: No, they are not that.*

Bob: If you know that for certain, are you taken in by it?

*Q: No.*

Bob: You can still go and see it. You can't help but see it. But if somebody said, 'Go down and get a bucket of blue water out of the sea ...'

Q: ... *you couldn't do it.*

Bob: You couldn't do it. You wouldn't even think about it twice because that innate knowing, through the investigation, is there. It is the same with the blue in the sky or the water in the mirage.

Q: *There just hasn't been an innate knowing through investigation.*

Bob: Why hasn't there been?

Q: *As you say here, it just didn't ring a bell.*

Bob: If you look at it along those lines, can you find a centre or any separate entity there?

Q: *No. Only an idea, 'me'.*

Bob: An idea. Now, what is an idea?

Q: *It is a collection of memories.*

Bob: Yes, or thoughts. So, it is still the same thing. That 'me' is an image also. That is like the blue sea and the blue sky. You have got to see through that idea, too.

Q: *Yes.*

Bob: Whatever comes up can't be it!

Q: *Yes.*

Bob: In essence it is. That is what you have got to understand. It is one without a second. In essence it is, but not

in the pattern or shape and form it is appearing as. All a thought is, is a pattern. The label is the shape and form that the vibration of energy has taken on. It has taken the shape and form of a word, the same as it has taken the shape and form of a body.

*Q: So, why the trick?*

Bob: You ask, 'Why the trick?' Just see through it. Instead of saying, 'It is all crap', see through the trick. But you want to know why the trick. You want to keep there, trying to find some solution to it, which you never will with thought.

*Q: Yes.*

Bob: It is all a trick or an imagined thing or an appearance. Why bother asking why? And who wants to know? It can only be something believing it is separate from that, that wants to know.

*Q: Yes. I get that.*

Bob: So, where does that leave you?

*Q: It leaves me right here, right now, aware of a mind that is trying to grasp onto something, but aware that it is ...*

Bob: Right there, right now there is a presence of awareness. Full stop. Trying to grasp anything is more movement on it. It is a movement on that awareness-presence or presence-awareness, whichever way you like to put it. You can look at it both ways. There is awareness of presence. Or, there is awareness of the presence of awareness. That is basically all that there is, and all there ever is. Sometimes they use the analogy of a mirror. The mirror is self-shining and reflections appear in it. Is the mirror concerned whether or why there is a reflection there or not?

*Q: No, it isn't.*

Bob: Well, is awareness concerned?

Q: *No.*

Bob: It is only the idea in the mind that seemingly becomes concerned and wants to know, isn't it? So, when we ask the question, 'Who wants to know?', we are not having a go at you!

Q: *No.*

Bob: Ask yourself that question. Find out if there is any separate entity or anything with any personal volition or anything at all there that does want to know.

Q: *Yes.*

Bob: Even the question 'Who wants to know?' is just another pattern of energy appearing as that thought or pattern or shape and form of 'Who wants to know?!'

## 4. No Independent Existence

Bob: If you happen to grasp what I am saying right now, that is inquiring, because you are seeing where it all seemingly started from. You are seeing that there is no 'I' there that ever could do anything. From that time we started to reason, everything was acquired in the mind. It was all 'acquired mind' from then on. Through the acquisition of thoughts, words, images, ideas and by putting labels on things or conceptualizing, we built onto the 'I am' events, experience and conditioning. We formed a mental picture about ourselves, a mental concept of what we believe ourselves to be. Instead of having no reference point whatsoever, which would be the natural functioning, we formed this reference point, or the ego or self-centre. Everything from that time becomes relative to that. That is when you believe that 'you' have done this and done that or 'I'm not good enough' or whatever it is. But it is only a mental image. It has no power. Look and investigate now. See that it hasn't got any power. It has got no substance of its own. Try and grasp that 'I' thought. 'I', say it to yourself. Try and grasp hold of it. Try and make something substantial out of it.

Q: *Yes.*

Bob: Do these things, because that is the only way you will see.

Q: *So, almost exaggerate it.*

Bob: Yes! You will find that it has got no substance. Above all, it has got no independent existence. How many thoughts can you have if you are not conscious or aware?

Q: *None.*

Bob: So, it can't stand on its own. There is no 'I' or 'me' that can stand by itself apart from consciousness. It is really only a happening or an event in consciousness or awareness. It has no reality. We show you that constantly. We say 'You are seeing right now?' 'You are hearing right now?' Are your eyes saying 'I see'? Are your ears saying 'I hear'? But the thoughts 'I see' or 'I hear' come up to translate that seeing or hearing.

*Q: That conditioned mind ...*

Bob: Let me ask you this. Does the thought 'I see', can that see? The thought comes up, 'I see'. But can the thought, itself, see?

*Q: No.*

Bob: Can the thought 'I hear', hear? So, would the thought 'I am aware' be the awareness? Would the thought 'I am consciousness' be the consciousness?

*Q: No.*

Bob: It has got no power. So, the thoughts 'I'm going to do this' or 'I lost it' or 'I'm going to find it' haven't got any power whatsoever. But we are still habitually doing that.

*Q: I probably haven't listened to anything you just questioned, but my mind has come up with: 'If I have been beating myself up all day because I can't solve something or shift through something', my mind is now coming up with 'So, what to do?' That is probably what you just told me. I had a sense of peace after you said it, but now my mind has come back. (Laughter)*

Bob: So, 'What to do?' What does that imply?

*Q: That there is an 'I' wanting to do something.*

Bob: You are implying some future time when you will do

it. But ask yourself, question: 'What past is there, unless I think about it?' To do that, you have got to pause and just not think for a moment or an instant. Realize that there is not a past unless I think about it. And what future is there unless I think about it? From that you see that mind itself is time.

When you are thinking about anything, it is always presently. The actuality of it is presently. You can't think about the past in the past. Nor can you think about the future in the future. When you think about the past, you are thinking about the past right now. When you are thinking about the future, you are thinking about the future right now. So, you are really never away from presence. That is why they say it is omnipresence. That is all there is. You see from this that mind itself is time. The mind is thinking about past, and the mind is thinking about future. So, past and future are mental concepts.

When you say, 'What to do?', what have you done? You have subtly taken onboard that there is a future time when you will catch it, or watch it or it will drop away.

*Q: ... and that there is a 'me' that has got all this stuff.*

Bob: See how subtle it can be.