

JEFF FOSTER graduated in Astrophysics from Cambridge University in 2001. Several years after graduation, he became addicted to the idea of “spiritual enlightenment”, and embarked on an intensive spiritual search which lasted for several years. The spiritual search came to an absolute end with the clear seeing that there is only ever Oneness. In the clarity of this seeing, life became what it always was: spontaneous, clear, joyful and fully alive. Jeff now holds meetings and retreats in the UK and Europe, clearly and directly pointing to the frustrations surrounding the spiritual search, to the nature of mind, and to the Clarity at the heart of everything.

Also by Jeff Foster:
Life Without A Centre
Beyond Awakening

THE REVELATION OF ONENESS



Dialogues on Nonduality
and Spiritual Awakening

JEFF FOSTER

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*Out beyond ideas of wrong doing
and right doing
there is a field.*

I'll meet you there.

*When the soul lies down in that grass
the world is too full to talk about.*

*Ideas, language, even the phrase "each other"
doesn't make any sense.*

Rumi

Contents

Introduction ☯ ix

Expressing the Inexpressible ☯ 1

DIALOGUE ONE: *The Spiritual Search*.....5

DIALOGUE TWO: *The Myth of Mind* 57

DIALOGUE THREE: *Unity in Diversity*..... 123

DIALOGUE FOUR: *Abundance*..... 179

DIALOGUE FIVE: *An Ordinary Awakening* 225

One, One, One 277

Note: the transcripts in this book have been anonymised. Edits have been made to improve the clarity of the text in its translation from the original audio, and occasionally different questions and answers have been combined.

Introduction

Jesus said to them:
“When you make the two one,
And when you make the inside like the outside
And the outside like the inside,
Then will you enter the Kingdom.”

Gospel of Thomas

A quiet revolution in spirituality is taking place. There is a growing sense that freedom cannot be found in philosophies, religions, ideologies; that it cannot be located in books, or reached through lifetimes of intense spiritual practice; that it cannot be passed on by enlightened or awakened spiritual masters; that it cannot be owned, cannot be taught, cannot be captured.

There is a growing sense that freedom is all there is, that it goes right to the heart of what you are, that it is constantly available and costs nothing. And that's what this message, which I call Life Without A Centre, points to – the absolute freedom right at the heart of life. It's a radical message, to be sure. And yet it's as soft and gentle as a kiss from a loved one.

This book is about the possibility that the spiritual search, and indeed all the seeking of the mind, can come to an end, once and for all. And in the absence of that search, there can be a clear seeing that all there is, is Oneness. And in

the clarity of Oneness, life loses its heaviness, and *what is* is always enough. Some people have called this “spiritual awakening”. But it’s not something complicated. It’s not reserved for the lucky few. It’s an awakening as simple and obvious as the sound of the rain *splish-splashing* up on the roof. It’s a bit like having a dream, and getting lost in it, and then waking up, and opening your eyes, and looking around and realising that *yes, of course, it was just a dream...*

There is no condemnation of seeking here, or of any religion or belief system. Seeking is nothing more or less than a longing for Home, a desperation to remember who you really are beyond name and form, beyond thoughts, beyond concepts, beyond all beyonds. And the search plays itself out, as it must. This is not to condemn the seeking, but to point to the possibility that it can fall away, to reveal something far more explosive than the spiritual teachings of this world ever promised.

This is not a new set of beliefs, or a fresh collection of ideas for the mind to chew on. No, this communication uses words to go beyond words, to point to something that cannot really be spoken of. It is not a teaching, not a communication from individual to individual, but a sharing from Oneness to Oneness. A sharing that ends in a revelation which completely transcends the dream of “me-and-you”.

And on some level, no more words are really necessary: it is already complete. Oneness is already perfectly whole, arising presently as the chair, the floor, the table, the body, the eyes, the nose, the arms, the legs, the heart beating, the breathing. All of this is Oneness, and nothing is out of place. And yet, for the individual, perhaps this cannot yet be seen.

For the individual, there may be more reading, more effort, more going to spiritual meetings, more meditating, and more trying to understand all of this. And that's exactly as it must be. The teachings of nonduality will appear to be relevant as long as there is an individual there trying to grasp them. That is the only purpose of these words: to be there, in friendship and love, for that individual. To meet them exactly where they are.

But when that individual dissolves into clarity, when the search unravels, these pointers to the ineffable will fall away too, and there will only be the immediacy of what is, with nobody there to know it. There will be a robin singing in the tree, a car whooshing past on the road, a cup of tea in your hand, and it will all be the divine Mystery; you will never look for anything else ever again, and there will be a complete release from the burden of individuality. A perfectly ordinary life will be lived, but nobody will be living it. And, in joy and clarity, it will be seen that there has only ever been this freedom, and that all the seeking and suffering of a lifetime played out in absolute innocence.



It may help to speak briefly about my past – bearing in mind, of course, that what we call “the past” is just a memory, just a thought arising presently, and that my past is really no more special than your past, or anyone else’s for that matter..

In my mid-twenties, after a lifetime of shyness, anxiety and an intense dislike of the entity I called “myself”, I entered a period of deep depression and illness. Fuelled by the desire to escape the suffering of a lifetime, I then embarked on

an intense spiritual search which lasted for several years, taking me on a journey through all the world's religions and spiritual traditions. For all of my life I had been a committed atheist, but the suffering had finally become so intense that an escape into spirituality seemed to be the only option.

I became addicted to the idea of “spiritual awakening”, and shut myself off from the outside world, meditating and self-enquiring and constantly changing and questioning my belief systems, reading literally hundreds of spiritual books and sitting for hours at a time in my garden trying to be “present”, waiting for the moment when the separate self would disappear and suffering would be no more.

However, I never found what I was looking for, and my despair and frustration reached a critical point. And then, in the midst of that despair, something opened up. The mind, exhausted from a lifetime of trying to reach unreachable goals, collapsed, and a deep relaxation took place. And the secret was revealed right in the midst of what I'd taken to be “my life”. The spiritual search ended with the realisation that there was only Oneness, and life was already complete, and wasn't separate from what I took myself to be. In that clear seeing, all seeking fell away, leaving only the clarity and simplicity of what is. It was a shocking to realise that the secret of spiritual awakening had been with me right from the beginning, but I just hadn't been able to see it, because I'd been too busy looking for it, and in that, separating myself from it. But the separation had been an illusion, and in the falling away of that illusion the truth was revealed, as clearly as a punch to the stomach. And the truth was revealed in a chair, a flower, a tree, my hands, my

feet, everything. The revelation of Oneness had been happening all around me, in each and every moment, but in my search for an identity I'd missed it completely.

But in hindsight, how perfectly it had all unfolded. A lifetime of seeking and suffering had been necessary in order to wake me up from the dream of seeking and suffering! And in fact, the seeking and suffering had always been pointing to another possibility: they had always been pointing back Home.



At first, I just met with people in pubs and on park benches and chatted about my experiences. Then a website appeared, and books got written, and meetings started to happen, first in London, and then in other parts of the UK and abroad. I never expected any of it. The whole thing seems to have a life of its own now, and who knows how it will evolve?

It's clear that Oneness delights in expressing this message. And what a gift it is to be able to meet so many people from all over the world, and yet to see that there are no "separate people" at all, and that it's all One. Really, I'm only ever meeting myself and every question that I'm asked is the same question: it's the mind longing to come Home. What a perfect play it all is.

Well, now it's time to come Home. Read the dialogues with an open mind, and an open heart, and it may dawn on you: it was never about the words. Beyond the words, something else is happening, and it's too extraordinary to talk about.

These meetings aren't really meetings at all. They are bonfires, in which all the questions of the mind unravel and burn up, leaving only the wonder of what is. Really, nothing can be said about this burning, because even the attempt to talk about the burning burns up in this. And yet, words continue to come, and life continues to unfold, and it's quite clear that we are not in control of this astonishing dream world, and that we are constantly being embraced by Oneness, in each and every moment, from cradle to grave, and beyond.

In these pages, may you meet your own absence, and explode into wonder.

Jeff Foster
June 2008
Brighton, UK

Expressing the Inexpressible

The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named is not the eternal Name.

Lao-Tzu, Tao Te Ching

Already, there is only Oneness.

Just life, but nobody living it.

Just *this*, playing itself out spontaneously, of its own accord,
in its own time.

And there is no “you” separate from “this”. That’s the illusion. That’s the dream. That’s the suffering.

Only nothing – no-thing – arising as everything. Only the absolute paradox of it all. And yet, in Life Without a Centre, there are still faces, places, feelings, ups and downs. Although now the ups are *equal* to the downs, pain is *equal* to pleasure, the most excruciating suffering is *equal* to the greatest joy. Because with the collapse of the individual self comes the ending of all opposites, all opposition, all duality, which is to say that everything now exists in perfect balance, as it always *has* done.

And yet, there is nobody there to know that balance, nobody who could name it, nobody who could speak of it, even if they wanted to.

This is *grace*, and it will never be captured in words.

And yet the words come...



The mind asks:

How to use dualistic concepts to describe that which is beyond duality? And anyway, isn't "beyond duality" just another concept, perhaps the biggest concept of them all?

The mind will struggle with these dream questions. But it has missed the point entirely. The mind is so lost in the dream of time and space that it could never hope to see this.

You see, what is being said here has nothing to do with words.

Once we get tangled up in words and concepts and meanings we're so totally, completely, utterly *lost*. Because this message is about what is *presently* happening: present sights, sounds and smells. It's about the utterly obvious *present appearance* of life, an appearance which appears to nobody, an appearance which dances and swirls and pretends to be solid but actually has no solidity at all, an appearance which cannot be grasped in any way, by anyone at any time.

It's an appearance which cannot be escaped, cannot be denied, cannot be transcended, because the person who would *try* to do any of these things does not even exist.

That person is an apparition, a ghost, a mirage, a thought.
And what power does thought have?

And so this is the end of choice, the end of control, and a
plunge into something far more explosive.

This is the absolute freedom which cannot be reached
through any sort of effort or non-effort.

This is the end of duality because it is the wide open space,
the vastness in which duality appears to arise in the first
place.

This is totally extraordinary, and yet it is nothing special.

This is the miracle of all miracles, and yet it is as simple as
breathing.

This is death, and yet it is also the source of all life.

This is not a concept to be understood, not a new belief to
be believed.

This is breathing, this is the heart beating, this is an entire
world arising out of nothing and falling back into nothing,
ceaselessly, playfully, like waves in the ocean, like icy breath
on a winter's day, like the memory of a loved one long since
departed.

This is not a state to be reached.

It is not something that some people have and others
don't.

This is just a description of the utterly obvious.

And it's so simple a newborn baby could see it:

Life has no centre.

And never did.

DIALOGUE ONE

The Spiritual Search

*From wherever and whenever this insight is
communicated, it has no connection with
end-gaining, belief, path or process.*

*It cannot be taught but is continuously shared.
It needs not to be argued, proven or embellished,
for it stands alone simply as it is.*

Tony Parsons

Part One

Jeff: On some level we all have a sense of something *beyond*. Something beyond the coming and going of things, beyond who we think we are, beyond the endless cycle of birth and death, beyond our achievements, beyond our names. Beyond all beyonds, there is a sense of unity, a sense of Oneness, of wholeness.

And as very young children, as babies, we are not yet *separate* from Life, and with that there is an innocence, a very alive and very palpable sense of wonder at the world. Somehow, as adults, we lose that sense of wonder, that sense of being absolutely present, totally at one with whatever is happening. We become very solid, very heavy, full of knowledge, full of regret, full of anxiety about the future. We feel *separate* from life. We fall into duality. We talk about “me and my life”, “me and my past”, “me and my goals”, as if we were somehow separate from these things. Unlike newborn babies, we have a very fixed idea of who we are. We cease to be amazed at life as it is. We stop *playing*. We become very complex creatures.

Now, what we are talking about today is not a new message. You find it everywhere really. All religions and spiritual traditions, in the end point to this Oneness, this Unity. And they call it God, or they call it Spirit, or they call it Energy, or they refuse to even talk or think about it.

And if you have come this far, you have a sense of what these words are pointing to. But *of course* you do, because it's not separate from what you are!

But we get very lost, don't we, in our search. In our spiritual search, as well as our material search. The mind's never ending search for *something more*. We never seem to be satisfied with *what is*, with what's happening. It never seems to be enough, and in a million different ways we try to recapture this sense of Oneness, having felt that we lost it somewhere along the way.

We were all newborn babies once; we've all tasted that simplicity, that freedom. And so to try and recapture it (although of course we don't realise that's what we're doing) we meditate, we plunge ourselves into our careers, we drink or take drugs to lose ourselves, we read spiritual books and self-help guides, we fall in and out of love, we spend our money on things we don't really need.

We spend our lives trying to come home. That's what we all want, really: *to come home, just to come home*.

What we are talking about today is the possibility that you never left home in the first place. The possibility that the sense of being a separate person is just an illusion, and that the illusion can fall away. And in that falling away, what's left is seen – in absolute clarity – to be Oneness. Yes, *everything* is seen to be that. There is nothing that Oneness is not... otherwise it wouldn't be Oneness!

And it can be seen in clarity that this whole search of ours is just a game that Oneness is playing with itself. Trying to find itself. The wave trying to become the ocean. Just a harmless game, the cosmic entertainment. And there can be so much laughter when this is seen. And in the seeing of it, it is released.

No wonder our desperate search for Oneness can only ever lead to frustration and disappointment, to a sense of *not quite being there yet*, of not quite being home, not quite being whole. Because in the attempt to *find* that, we are *fuelling* the sense of separation, the sense that we are not there already, and it's a vicious circle.

So we aren't going to be learning any new practices today. This is just a description of what there already is, of what's happening now. But the poor little mind can't see it! We can't see it! Well of course *you* can't see it! Because *you* – the individual who thinks he is separate from the Whole – don't exist! *You* are just a thought, arising now, arising *in* this!

What we're talking about today isn't about the words, and we can get so lost in words and concepts. But it's not about the concepts and it never was. But the words and concepts are fine, they are part of the play of Oneness as well. We don't need to reject the words or concepts, or reject our spiritual practices. Just to point to the possibility that perhaps *already* there is Oneness, right at the heart of things, right here. Where else would it be? And perhaps in the seeing of that, the practising and the striving and the longing will fall away, to reveal a clarity that's absolutely beyond mind.

And this isn't something complicated. It's not an *intellectual* understanding. We don't need any more concepts, any more knowledge. The amount of knowledge we have already is enough! So this isn't really about the words, or the understanding of those words, it's really about the – *and the moment you say it you've turned it into something* – call it an energy, call it a resonance, it's undeniably there when the seeking subsides. On the surface what is happening here is

that a bunch of people have gathered in a room to listen to someone else talk about nonduality and spiritual awakening. But what's *really* happening here is quite astonishing: Oneness is meeting itself. And that's what it's always doing. We're just pointing back to it here. That there is no solid "you" at the heart of your life. That's the mirage, that's the illusion, that's the heaviness. There's just life living itself.

And to the mind this is heresy! The mind goes "of course *I'm* in control! *I'm* doing this! *I'm* responsible for everything that happens!" So this message can be quite threatening to a mind hooked on the idea of choice and control. But really this is the freedom of it: *Life lives itself*. We are not separate people in a room. There is only wholeness, and it constantly shines.

And some spiritual teachings talk about awakening, enlightenment or liberation, and they can make it sound like it's something you can get, given time. Something you can have. And the beauty of this, is that it's so open, so free that it can't be possessed, it can't be grasped, it can't be had by an individual. And that is the freedom of it. The frustration in the spiritual search is the attempt to grasp this, to grasp the ungraspable. It doesn't need to be grasped. It's already presenting itself. And yet, in this, the endless seeking of the mind is allowed to continue for as long as it needs to. Even seeking is allowed in this. Seeking is as much Oneness as anything else, and that's the ultimate secret really. We can spend our lives trying to put an end to seeking, trying to stop the mind, but the mind never needed to be stopped. That's the beauty of this, nothing needs to stop. Oneness embraces it all, allows it all to continue, until it doesn't anymore. And on some level this is already recog-

nised. We've all been newborn babies. We're still newborn babies, really. Innocent, whole. We just got a little confused for a while.

So, it cannot be understood. And that's the freedom of it. That's the beauty of it. We'll open up now for questions, and comments, and apparent answers. But really this isn't about the questions and the answers. It's about something that's far too simple for all of that. And yet the questions and answers play themselves out, and it's so obvious that you're not doing that. If you could stop the seeking, stop the questioning, you would do it right now, you'd have done it already. The mind just plays itself out. This is life living itself. So all we can do with words is to try and point back to this as clearly as we can.



Questioner: Jeff, I recognise almost everyone in this room. We've all come many times to ask questions. You've sat and listened to us asking questions. What is the most common error that we make?

Well, questioning is what the mind *does*! The mind wants to *grasp* this freedom, wants to *understand* it, wants to take it and *use* it somehow. So really, every question is the *same* question. Every question rests on the assumption that there is a separate person there, a questioner, and that there is an answer that you can get, and that once you get the answer, you know, *bang*! So really it's all the *same* question. Every question is the same question. It's a movement into a future. Into some sort of future understanding.

So there's no basic, fundamental *error*. Because to say that there is a fundamental error would be to imply that you could somehow correct the error, given time. That there is something *you* are doing wrong, something that *you* can fix, given time. No, nothing needs to be corrected. The assumption of a separate person is just an assumption. An assumption does not need to be corrected through effort. But when that assumption is seen in clarity, it no longer has any power. And this seeing is happening now, and it's always happening, although that could never be apparent to a separate individual.

Q. I think that's the part where I get confused. I don't feel that it's happening now. I hear you and other teachers saying that I am That, that I already know all of this, and yet I still blather on with these questions!

And *It* is what is doing the blathering. Right now! Oneness is right there, blathering away!

The questions just come out. They happen. If you could somehow correct this, if this was something you could do, if there was an answer, if someone could tell you how to correct this problem, there would be a *formula*, and you would just do it. That's the myth. That's the search. The search for the antidote to a non-existent problem.

So, there is the assumption that this needs to be seen by you, which implies a future. Well, I *tried* for years to see this, but I never could. It was only in the *falling away* of the seeking that it revealed itself.

And it's this. And it's here. And it's now.

Q. So what needs to fall away is the thought that this can be seen in the future?

Well, you could spend years trying to *get rid* of that thought too!

Q. Yes, it's circular.

Yes. The mind always wants to *do* something. It doesn't want to hear that nothing needs to be done. And that's *not* the same as saying "don't do anything". Things will be done. In fact, everything that needs to be done is already being done. Look, right now, thoughts are swirling around. *Are you doing that?* If you were doing that, you would be able to stop those thoughts right now!

You see, everything just *happens*, and this is the last thing that the mind wants to hear! It's all spontaneous, the whole thing. And you can't *reach* spontaneity. You can't reach the effortless using effort.

Q. Actually I felt that spontaneity coming here today. I didn't really want to come here, but it happened.

Yes, everything just happens. But the mind doesn't want to hear that. It wants to be in control, or at least to think that it's in control. And there can be a sense of fear beneath that. The mind fears losing its illusory control! And actually the fear is groundless. The fear is the separate person trying to cling onto control. The mind reacts against the existence of the separate person being seen through.

The good news is that there is nothing to fear. There is *just*

the fear. Just presently arising fear. And the fear is just energy, aliveness, it's not really "fear" at all. It's not solid. It's a play of energy happening. And we *call* it fear. "It's my fear, I've got to *do* something with the fear." That's the illusion.

Q. And it's really only a thought?

Yes. You see, really these are not *your* questions, this is not *your* fear. This is not *your* mind. It's not *my* mind or *his* mind or *her* mind. It's all the *same* mind. It's all the same question. It's the Universe questioning itself. Any question that you could ask here, it's been asked before. You are not alone.

Every single question that arises at these meetings, I've already asked them. For years and years, I asked every single question known to man. And I never found a single answer, not one that satisfied anyway. Not one that ultimately satisfied. Answers satisfy for a while, and then the next question comes up!

Q. It all feels very unsatisfactory!

Yes, of course, because every question assumes an answer. An answer *out there*, that I can get. And that's the basic dissatisfaction. But what if *this* is the answer? *What if this - the present moment, what's happening right now, whatever you want to call it - is the answer? The answer of all answers?* That burns up all questions, and with it, all dissatisfaction at your lack of answers!

Everything that is arising is appropriate, it has to be.

Because you're not doing it. This is way too simple. To the mind, it seems almost naïve. But how can you deny *what is*? What is arising presently *has* to be arising. It must.

The mind cannot go there. But it's where you always are. It's home.

(Long silence)

To the mind this is almost madness. That everything is okay. That what arises is as it should be, because it couldn't be any other way. To the mind it sounds almost crazy. Either that, or the mind isn't interested!

To the mind, what we are talking about has no value. The mind cannot do anything with this. There is no food here for a hungry ego. This cannot be used, and that's the freedom of it.

Q. And yet the mind wants this, doesn't it? It searches. It desires. The mind has a funny relationship with this.

The mind lives in a world of things. Of duality. Of boundaries and limits. Of this and that. Of up and down, left and right, good and evil, ignorance and understanding. It tries to use the world of duality to understand that which is beyond duality. The mind thinks it can *know* this. It tries to use limitation to go beyond limitation, and fails miserably.

But the beauty of this, is that it cannot be captured in any idea, by any system of thought. It cannot be put into a box and sold. If it could, it wouldn't be freedom. If it could be captured, it wouldn't be what it is. Aliveness cannot

be captured, it's too alive! And aliveness will destroy any attempts to capture it. And yet it *allows* the seeking too.

The mind will only see paradox here.

Q. The mind thinks that it knows this, doesn't it? It's very tricky. There can be impersonations of this. It can try to convince itself that it's experiencing this, when it's not.

Yes. The mind has a sense of this, but it can't do anything with it. It tries to grasp this. And it will claim all sorts of experiences. But what we are talking about is not an experience. Experiences come and go in this.

Q. So this is beyond all experience? Which is why it cannot be described, and you can only point to it?

Yes, and that's why there are no prescriptions. Nobody can tell you what to do to get Oneness, although many people will try! The moment someone gives you something to do, they are feeding the mind. That's what a hungry mind wants: something to do. Some path, some process, some more food. "Give me something to do" is the mind's mantra. And yet, having said that, there is nothing wrong with this effort. That's the mind's job and it does it perfectly. Everything performs its function perfectly. There is no blame here.

But really, all that effort can become so exhausting. Trying to grasp, trying to know, trying to achieve, trying to be free. Trying to become what you are. Trying to see what this is. And it's bound to end in frustration. Because this is presenting itself all the time, it's constantly revealing itself,

and that takes no effort on your part whatsoever. And yet the efforting plays itself out, as it must.

And it's always new, always changing, but the mind can only see what it knows. It sees the past. And it might even take the words being used here today, and turn this into some sort of path, some sort of process, some sort of intellectual understanding. This is what the mind does in its innocence. In its innocence, it tries to grasp this.

Q. But it can't, can it? It's like "me" trying to awaken. I can't, because it's not "me" who awakens. The awakening is *from* the dream of "me". There's a real tension there, a real struggle.

Yes, that seems to be the paradox of this. That there is just what's happening. Sights and sounds and smells and feelings and colour and textures, just what's happening. Just what is arising presently. Just this. And *yet*, in that, there appears to be this separate "me", this person, who appears to have some sort of life *outside* of this. And to the mind that is the absolute paradox of nonduality. It cannot be understood.

In actuality, there is no paradox. The mind *calls* it a paradox because it's trying to understand it. Actually there is just the divine mystery of it all, and it cannot be known. What's happening now cannot be known, cannot be grasped. The paradox of nothing as everything, the paradox of Oneness appearing as separate things. But the mind always moves away from that absolute simplicity and obviousness of what is. It moves into a future. It moves into the story of "me".

Q. Is the paradox just the mind trying to understand something that it will never understand?

Yes. But actually there is no paradox. There is just the thought “there is a paradox”. So this entire world of thought that the mind has constructed, it’s gone in a flash, when the thought isn’t there. When the thought goes, the world goes. That’s how fragile it is, that’s how precious it is. And on some level we all know this, that all the concepts in the world, all the knowledge in the world, can’t bring us home. Because all of it is just a thought!

Q. When you’re so used to operating in the world of thought, everything seems so solid. It’s like attention has to come back to thoughts, otherwise there’s a solid reality around them.

And yet the beauty of thoughts, is that they just arise out of nowhere. Nobody is thinking. There are thoughts, but no thinker. *You* are not doing thinking.

Q. But something’s gone wrong somewhere?

Apparently so. It’s when they begin to be *my* thoughts, that’s where the problems begin for the individual.

Q. It’s absurd really.

Yes, in a sense it’s absurd. What the mind does is absurd. But in another sense, it’s absolutely appropriate. It’s what it has to do to find itself. All it’s trying to do is find itself. All it wants to do is to come home. And it’s doing all of this absurdity in absolute innocence. It doesn’t really know what

it's doing! We don't really know what we are doing. If we did, we wouldn't do most of the stuff we do to ourselves!

But we turn the mind into the enemy. We are always doing something with the mind, trying to control thoughts, trying to suppress them, putting the mind on a leash. As if you were separate from it all! As if it were yours to do something about! But nothing is yours, and that's the freedom. It all just arises out of nothing, and it's spontaneous. That's the gift of what is. And the moment there is a movement to try and possess this freedom, that's the suffering.

And yet, in the so-called material world the seeking seems to work for a while. If you want something, you can go out and get it. If you want money, you can, apparently, go out and make money. This seems to work, most of the time anyway. But the mind thinks it can use that same mechanism to get this freedom. It thinks, in its innocence, that it can seek its way to freedom, that it can somehow *find* awakening. To the mind, if it can't grasp something, if it can't possess something, then it's worth nothing. But in the absence of the looking, Oneness reveals itself. And then it's like, "oh, it was this, it was here all along!"



Q. So seeing just arises when it arises?

Yes, it's too simple. We're like newborn babies.

Q. But something is going on here. Being here reminds me of some sort of spiritual path. I mean, I could be looking to you to help me get something.

Yes, in the story, it appears as though you decided to come here. That you were drawn by something, and ended up coming here. But actually this – sitting in this room, talking to each other – is all there is. It's all that's happening. And in that, the story "I came here today" arises.

But actually, what's happening is that Oneness is meeting itself. And resonating. And you are not doing this. It's only in the *story* that "you" did this, that you are somehow responsible for being here. That's a story we tell.

You know, I could tell the story that I got the train here today. And on the level of a story, it's true. But it's just a story arising now. It's just a thought. And what's far more alive is this, what's happening. And this allows those stories to arise. This isn't about denying the stories. If someone asks me my name, I'll say "Jeff". I don't have to say "there's nobody here and I'm just a story"! So the ordinariness of this is quite shocking to a mind that's been seeking the extraordinary for a lifetime. But that's the freedom of it. It was always in the very ordinary. It was in the table. It was in the chairs. It was in the floor, the ceiling, the breathing, the heart beating. The ordinary things of life. And yet we could never see it, because we were looking for something higher, something deeper, something more meaningful than what was already the case. Something more than this.

And we'd separated the ordinary from the extraordinary, the lower from the higher. That's what the mind does, it *separates*. In its innocence, it's all it can do. So really this is Oneness meeting itself, as it's always doing. Not just at this meeting, but everywhere.



Q. So does meditation, or self-enquiry (asking the question “who am I?”) feed the mind as well?

Well, you could ask “who am I?” until you are blue in the face. But who is asking? You see, you will never find an answer to that question. You will only ever find the asking. Just the question “who am I?” floating in nothingness. But in that sense it serves a purpose. To lead to a point of absolute frustration, showing you that the question “who am I?” is based on a faulty assumption – that there is a separate, solid “I” that can be found through effort. But there is nothing wrong with self-enquiry. If it happens, it’s absolutely appropriate.

Ultimately however, no practice, spiritual or otherwise, can satisfy, because as long as there is practising, there is a *separate person* doing the practice, a *separate person* doing the meditation, a *separate person* doing the self-enquiry. So perhaps that is the point of meditation, self-enquiry, and so on: to open up the possibility of realising that there is nobody there who does any of these things in the first place.

And that is the absolute freedom that isn’t a result of anything. Freedom cannot be reached through effort. But I’m *not* saying don’t go off and self-enquire. You have no choice! If you find yourself self-enquiring, then that’s what’s happening, and that’s already Oneness. It’s Oneness doing the self-enquiry! That’s the grand cosmic joke: it’s all already Oneness. Spiritual practices are divine, as they are. There is no condemnation here, although that’s how it might be heard.



**Q. So there are no special conditions for seeing to arise?
It will arise when it does?**

There's only ever seeing. The miracle is all that's ever seen.
This doesn't involve a future.

**Q. So seeing isn't something that's going to come in the
future?**

It's already happening. It's all that's happening.

Q. But the seeing sometimes appears to be obscured.

There can be *waiting* for seeing. And it's just an idea.

Q. So is that idea getting in the way of seeing?

Apparently so. But actually, nothing could ever get in the way of seeing. It's just an *idea* that something can get in the way of seeing! That idea simply arises *in* the seeing, the seeing that you aren't doing. The seeing that is. What can get in the way of this? This is constantly revealing itself.

There's the idea that you aren't seeing it yet. The idea of a separate person who could see this. The idea of a person who is separate from this, who one day will see it. And the whole spiritual search begins there. That's the root of it all. Really, Oneness is all that's ever seen. All that's ever smelled. All that's ever heard. All that's ever thought.

Q. We make a big deal out of this don't we? I mean, with all our spiritual teachings.

Yes we do.



Q. What is the purpose of ideas getting in the way of seeing? Is it part of the play?

It's Oneness playing the game of being separate. And there is no point to a game. It's just a game, just a joyous play of light and sound and apparent thoughts getting in the way. And when the idea of being a separate person falls away, it's *all* seen to be a game. And in the game, everything is equal, everything is allowed, everything can be itself fully, but the heaviness goes out of it, the suffering goes out of it. It's a divine play, and there's nothing serious about it.

To a separate person, this existence can seem very heavy. It's a big world out there, and you need to protect yourself, defend yourself, you need to know who you are. That's the root of the whole thing, the root of all suffering.

Q. But that's part of the same game?

Yes, it's Oneness playing the game of being a separate person so it can finally come to know itself.

Q. But there is so much suffering, and it doesn't make any sense to the mind.

It doesn't make sense because the mind is trying to under-

stand it. The mind is trying to understand a game, a dance. It's a dance! A dance cannot be understood, and does not need to be. Its purpose is not to be understood. The purpose of the dance *is* the dance. It *is* its own purpose. In itself, it is already complete. To the mind that's incomprehensible. The mind moves away from the sense of Oneness, and begins to ask "why?". When the separation falls away, that question doesn't even arise anymore.

And yet there appears to be this play of separation, and apparent people going on a spiritual search, and the falling away of separation, but it's not as a result of anything. It's uncaused. There's nothing you can do to see all of this, because you *are* all of this.

So, *why* separation? *Why* suffering? Well, the answer is always staring you in the face. The answer is this. This puts an end to all questions. The fact that this is happening *is* the answer. To the mind that's too simple. But this simplicity is very powerful. It burns everything up, and leaves only presence.

Q. Does the mind fear that?

Yes, of course. To the mind, the end of questioning, the end of me, is like death. "What will I do when I'm not there? How will things get done? If the seeking ended, wouldn't I just sit on the floor in a pool of bodily fluids and do nothing?"

(Laughter)

These are the fears the mind uses to keep itself going, to try and cling on. And all the while, life just lives itself. As it's doing now. What's happening now is Oneness doing itself.

In that there is no fear. The end of the known is the end of fear. Because it's the end of having to defend something. There is nothing to defend. There is just openness. Just love.