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The aim of my teaching is enlightenment—awakening from the dream state of separateness to the reality of the One. In short, my teaching is focused on realizing what you are. You may find other elements in my teaching that simply arise as a response to people’s particular needs of the moment, but fundamentally I’m only interested in you waking up.

Enlightenment means waking up to what you truly are and then being that. Realize and be, realize and be. Realization alone is not enough. The completion of Self-realization is to be, which means to act, do, and express what you realize. This is a very deep matter, a whole new way of life—living in and as reality instead of living out the programmed ideas, beliefs, and impulses of your dreaming mind.

The truth is that you already are what you are seeking. You are looking for God with his eyes. This truth is so simple and shocking, so radical and taboo that it is easy to miss among your flurry of seeking. You may have heard what I am saying in the past and you may even believe it, but my question is, have you realized it with your whole being? Are you living it?

My speaking is meant to shake you awake, not to tell you how to dream better. You know how to dream better. Depending on what your mental and emotional state at the time is, I may be very gentle and soft with you, or not so gentle and soft. You may feel better after

talking with me, but that is incidental to awakening. Wake up! You are all living Buddhas. You are the divine emptiness, the infinite nothing. This I know because I am what you are, and you are what I am. Let go of all ideas and images in your mind, they come and go and aren't even generated by you. So why pay so much attention to your imagination when reality is for the realizing right now?

Now don't think that awakening is the end. Awakening is the end of seeking, the end of the seeker, but it is the beginning of a life lived from your true nature. That's a whole other discovery—life lived from oneness, embodying what you are, being a human expression of oneness. There is no question of you becoming the One; you *are* the One. The question is, are you a *conscious* expression of the One? Has the One awakened to itself? Have you remembered what you really are? And if you have, are you living it? Are you really living consciously as the One?

All my talks are about awakening or life lived after awakening. No matter what I *seem* to be talking about, I'm really talking about one of these two things.



Before I had my final awakening years ago, I was crazed for enlightenment. You have to be a little crazy to seriously study Zen. My teacher used to say, “Only the crazy ones stay.” One way my craziness worked was that before I went to sit with my teacher’s group for a couple of hours on Sunday mornings, I would get up early, at 5:00 or 5:30 a.m., and do extra sittings. I would sit in a little room meditating and freezing to death.

Sitting there on one of those particular mornings, two things happened, one after another, and they seemed very paradoxical. The first one was a spontaneous seeing that everything was one. For me that manifested as hearing a birdcall, a chirp, in the front yard, and from somewhere inside me the question arose, “What is it that hears the sound?” I had never asked this question before. I suddenly realized I

was as much the sound and the bird as the one hearing the bird, that the hearing and sound and bird were all manifestations of one thing. I cannot say what that one thing is, except to say *one* thing.

I opened my eyes, and I found the same thing was happening in the room—the wall and the one seeing the wall were the same thing. I thought that was very strange, and I realized that the one thinking this was another manifestation of that. I got up and began to move around the house looking for something that wasn't part of the One. But everything was a reflection of that One thing. Everything was the divine. I wandered into the living room. In the middle of a step, consciousness, or awareness, suddenly left everything, whether it was a physical thing or body thing or world thing.

All in the step of a foot, everything disappeared. What arose was an image of what seemed like an infinite number of past incarnations, as if heads were lined up one behind another as far back as I could see. Awareness realized something like, “My God, I’ve been identified with various forms for umpteen lifetimes.” At that moment, consciousness—spirit—realized it had been so identified with all these forms that it really thought it was a form right up to this lifetime.

All of a sudden, consciousness was unconfined to the form and existed independently. It was no longer defining itself by any form, whether that form was a body, a mind, a lifetime, a single thought, or a memory. I saw this, but I almost couldn't believe it. It was like someone just stuck a million dollars in my pocket, and I kept pulling it out as if I didn't believe I had it. But it couldn't be denied either. Even though I am using the word “I,” there was no “I,” only the One.

These two experiences happened together, one following within a few moments of the other. In the first, I became the Oneness of everything, and in the second, I became the consciousness or spirit that totally woke up out of all identification, even out of Oneness. When the Oneness dropped away, there was still a basic awakensness, but it had two different aspects: I'm everything, and I'm absolutely nothing. This was the awakening, the realization of Self.

The next thing that happened was that I took a step, just an ordinary step. It felt like the way a baby does when it takes his first good

step and then smiles and looks around as if to say, “Did you see that?” and you can see his joy. So I took a step, and it was like, “Wow! The first step!” and another step, and then another, and I kept moving in circles because every step was the first step. It was a miracle.

In each “first” step, formless consciousness and Oneness just merged together so that the awakesness that had always identified itself as form was now actually inside of the form, unidentified. It wasn’t looking through any thoughts or memories of what had come before, just through the five senses. With no history or memory, every step felt like a first step.

Then the funniest thought came through my mind—funny to me after thirteen years of Zen practice—“Oops. I just woke up out of Zen!” When you wake up, you realize that you wake up out of everything, including all the things that have helped to bring you there. The next thing I did was write my wife this odd note. It said something like, “Happy birthday. Today is my birthday. I’ve just been born.” I left it for her, and when I drove past our house to go to my meditation group, I saw her standing there waving the note in her hand. I don’t know how, but she knew exactly what it meant.

I didn’t tell my teacher anything about the experience for about three months because it seemed pointless. Why would anyone need to know this? I felt no need to tell anyone or be congratulated. It seemed totally sufficient in and of itself. It was only later that I learned that my experience corresponded to what my teacher had been talking about all along. I realized that this awakening was what all the teachings were about. In a very real way, that experience, which continues and is still the same today, is the foundation of everything I talk about.

When we really start to take a look at who we think we are, we become very grace prone. We start to see that while we may have various thoughts, beliefs, and identities, they do not individually or collectively tell us who we are. A mystery presents itself: we realize that when we really look at ourselves clearly and carefully, it is actually astounding how completely we humans define ourselves by the content of our minds, feelings, and history. Many forms of spirituality try to get rid

of thoughts, feelings, and memories—to make the mind blank, as if that were a desirable or spiritual state. But to have the mind blank is not necessarily wise. Instead, it is more helpful to see *through* thoughts and to recognize that a thought is just a thought, a belief, a memory. Then we can stop binding consciousness or spirit to our thoughts and mental states.

With that first step, when I realized that what was looking through my eyes and senses was awakeness or spirit rather than conditioning or memory, I saw that the same spirit was actually looking through all the other pairs of eyes. It didn't matter if it was looking through other conditioning; it was the exact same thing. It was seeing itself everywhere, not only in the eyes, but also in the trees, the rocks, and the floor.

It is paradoxical that the more this spirit or consciousness starts to taste itself, not as a thought or idea or belief, but as just a simple presence of awakeness, the more this awakeness is reflected everywhere. The more we wake up out of bodies and minds and identities, the more we see that bodies and minds are actually just manifestations of that same spirit, that same presence. The more we realize that who we are is totally outside of time, outside of the world, and outside of everything that happens, the more we realize that this same presence *is* the world—all that is happening and all that exists. It is like two sides of a coin.

The biggest barrier to awakening is the belief that it is something rare. When this barrier is dropped, or at least you start to tell yourself, “I really don't know if my belief that awakening is difficult is true or not,” then everything becomes instantly available to you. Since this is all that exists, it can't be rare and difficult unless we insist it is. The basis of all this is not theoretical, it is experiential. No one taught it to me, and no one can teach it to you.

What is so beautiful about awakening is that when you are no longer functioning through your conditioning, then the sense of “me” who was living that life is no longer there. Most people are familiar with the sense of a me living this life. But when this is seen through, the experience is that what really runs and operates this

life is love, and this same love is in everybody all the time. When it is working its way through your personal stuff, it gets dissipated, but it is still there. Nobody owns this love. *Everybody* is essentially the manifestation of this love.

You have experienced moments in your life, whether or not you are aware of them, when you momentarily forgot the “I” with which you have been identified. It can happen spontaneously at a beautiful sight, or it can occur from egoic forgetfulness. People usually discount these moments. After experiencing the “nice moment,” you then reconstitute your familiar sense of identity. But actually these opportunities are like little peepholes through which the truth is experienced. If you start to watch for them, you will notice them. All of a sudden the mind will stop thinking of its story. You might notice that your separate identity or sense of a me just took a break, and whatever you truly are didn’t disappear. Then ask yourself, “What is the real me? If my identity can take a break and I don’t disappear, what am I then?” or rather, “What am I when I *do* disappear?”

Usually the mind gets activated in response to the question, “What am I?” It starts thinking about it until true intelligence breaks in again and says, “Now wait a minute—that’s just more thought.” Then there can be a gap of quietness between thoughts, and if you are very present in that gap, you stop acting out your familiar identity. As soon as identity jumps into the gap, you don’t feel present anymore. Being nobody is usually so baffling to the mind that it starts filling that gap very quickly. “How can I be nobody?” But to fill it up with a somebody is meaningless. If you really want to know what you are, just experience the gap, experience the openness, and let it bloom inside. There is no better way to find out what you are.

This is when spirituality becomes not only real, but adventurous and fun. You ask, “This openness, this presence”—call it what you will—“this is what I am?” You start to feel or sense that you’re on to something that’s not a creation of thought, belief, or faith. And when you start to take it in, just this awakens that’s free of all identity, it’s mind-boggling. In Zen we call it the uncreated; it’s the only thing around that your mind is not creating.

There is a wonderful parable from the Bible that says it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven. Trying to hold on to your identities, even if they are the most spiritual, most holy of identities, is like trying to shove a camel through the eye of a needle. They are too coarse, too big, too untrue, too fabricated to get into the truth. But there's one thing that can get through the eye of the smallest possible needle. Space, your own nothingness, can get right through into heaven. None of us can take one shred of a self-centered identity with us.

Heaven is the experience when we've passed into our own nothingness. We realize our own pure awakesness and see that what we are is pure spirit with no form. We recognize that formless spirit is the essence, the animating presence of everything. This is being in heaven because, in each step, spirit and essence are occupying our body. That's the true meaning of being born again. Being born again is not just a great emotional religious conversion experience. That can be nice, but it's only like changing your clothes. Being born again is actually being born *again*, not getting a new spiritual garment. More accurately, it is being *unborn* when we realize that eternal nothingness is actually living this life called "my life."

But just because you realize the truth and awaken spiritually doesn't mean that your life is going to be an unending ascent of good fortune. That would not be the peace that surpasses all understanding. As long as our lives feel good, it is easy to have peace. But life does what it does, like an ocean moving. Whether the waves are high or low, it is just as sacred, and, as nobody, you are not harmed by it. Within this awakesness is the peace that surpasses understanding, and your life doesn't need to be doing better. It can just do what life does; it just flows. You don't care.



Student: Letting go of our egocentricity so we can experience awakening—do you suppose it is peeled off us the way we peel an orange?

Adyashanti: Peeling is like having a dream at night in which you dream you are going to a therapist, and you start feeling better and better, and you feel like you are getting somewhere. Awakening is as if you are sitting on the couch telling your story, and you are still a mess—haven't gotten very far. Then all of a sudden you realize this is a dream, this isn't real, you're making it up. That's awakening. There's a big difference.

Student: I've made up all of it?

Adyashanti: The whole thing. But the awakesness in you is not dreaming. Only the mind is dreaming. It tells itself stories and wants to know if you're progressing. When you shift into wakefulness, you realize, "Wait, it's a dream. The mind is creating an altered state of reality, a virtual reality, but it's not true—it's just thought." Thought can tell a million stories inside of awareness, and it's not going to change awareness one bit. The only thing that's going to change is the way the body feels. If you tell yourself a sad story, the body reacts to that. And if you tell yourself a self-aggrandizing story, the body feels puffed up, confident. But when you realize it's all stories, there can be a vast waking up out of the mind, out of the dream. *You* don't awaken, what has eternally been awake realizes *itself*. That which is eternally awake is what you are.

SATSANG 2

We meet here to recognize the Truth that is eternal. To be in *satsang* means to be in association with Truth. When we understand this, we can meet here together with a common intention.

When you come to *satsang* to have association with Truth, you are willing to ask, “Who am I?” or “What am I?” without any script or role, without the story about who you are and what you are, releasing the script of what you think your life is about. Every sense of identity has its script. Some of the roles in those scripts might be, “I’m the successful guy or girl,” or “I’m the unsuccessful one,” or “I’m the one whose relationships never work out,” or “I’m the spiritual seeker who has had many spiritual experiences.” We each have a specific role and our stories about that role. But our roles and stories are not what we are.

The beautiful thing about *satsang* is that it’s an opportunity to wake up from the story of you. When you start to realize what Truth is, you recognize that Truth is not an abstraction, it is not out there at a distance from you, and it is not something to learn tomorrow. You discover that Truth is who you are without your story or script, right now.

The real blessing of this meeting is the opportunity to be stopped right now, not tomorrow. Awakening to the truth of your being

won't be attained in the future. It's not something you prepare for or earn or deserve. Awakening is a radical shift in identity. You think you're you, but you're not. You are eternal being. The time to wake up is now. Not tomorrow. Now.

When the little me starts to realize why it is here in satsang, it thinks, "This can't be a place for me. I thought I had come here to gain an advantage, but there is none." It's a revolutionary idea for any of us to go anywhere or do anything where we wouldn't be gaining an advantage. It's not that there is anything wrong with getting an advantage at times. But in satsang, what we come to see is that our happiness and freedom have nothing to do with gaining any sort of advantage. Instead, they have everything to do with allowing ourselves to experience in this moment what it's like to be completely disarmed of our strategy. That includes our strategy to be rid of strategy. This is an opportunity to stop all strategies of becoming.

The blessing here is that we are welcoming the direct experience of the little me being disarmed. Almost everywhere else you go, that sense of being disarmed is pushed away, hidden, not even talked about or acknowledged. Here we can ask, instead, "What am I, and who am I *now*—without my story, without my demand upon this moment, without my hope of this moment, without my script?" The mind, if it were to say anything, would answer, "I don't know," because the mind does not know what it is when it's disarmed, it doesn't know who or what it is without its role or its character to play.

The actor who is acting all this out is named "me." Even when we respond to or welcome the call of satsang, that actor keeps maintaining himself or herself, and the tendency of mind is to say, "I'm here." But when we look for what is behind the "I'm here," it's like yelling in an empty room—there's an echo, "I'm here," and every time we look, we find only an echo. Who? "I'm here." Who?

So then you start to let go even more, to be disarmed from engaging in the more subtle game of thinking you are an actor behind the role. You start to see that it is just another narrative. If you truly look, there is the wonderful chance to be fully disarmed because you will not find an actor, or anyone at all.

When this disarming happens, you are allowing the wordless experience to present itself. This is the wordless experience of *being* that you can experience for yourself. You will realize that it is not a script or role, it carries no agenda, and has no demand upon this moment. It's also not the actor. What you are is prior to your idea of you.

What you are without your role is often assumed to be hidden somewhere. And so when you let go of your role, when you look past the character called “me” for the truth of your being, you may think that there's a someone to find who is somehow hidden. If this happens, when you come into this state of openness, you may think, “There's nobody here, but I'll look for it anyway, look for the Self, the Truth, the enlightened me.” Looking for the enlightened self is just another role, another script. It's part of the spiritual seeker's script. If you drop that script—*now* what are you?

Of course, the reason I ask you to inquire into what you are is because, at this moment, you are living the answer. Nothing that I would tell you is a substitute for that aliveness, for that living of the answer. That's why it has been said many times that only the people who don't know who they are, are the ones who are awake. Everyone else knows who he or she is. They are their script, whatever their script is, even if that script is, “I'm not awake.” Awakeness is to have *no* script, to know that ultimately a script is just a script, and a story is just a story.

There is a state in which the mind says, “I have no idea who I am,” because it can't find the right script. Awakening is the realization that happens after the mind says, “I give up. I just have no idea who I am.” When you start to understand this, you realize that if you put down your script of being someone listening, and if you put down your script of being someone saying something, and you just drop these roles for a moment, you are not who you have taken yourself to be. Coming to satsang is a very revolutionary thing for this idea of “me” to do, because the me thinks it's going to get its happiness through changing its script, its role, its identity—even if its identity is to have no identity. It will do whatever it takes to keep the ball called “me” rolling.