

**UNCOVERING  
WHO  
WE ARE**

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Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj's book, *I AM THAT*, which states that "I AM" is the only fact that I am sure of. Maharaj then grandly expands that notion throughout his book.

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commentary by Coleman Barks, illuminations by Michael Green.

THE JERUSALEM BIBLE, Doubleday & Company, Inc. Garden City, N.Y., 1966.

I am particularly indebted to Ray Brown for his friendship while teaching on the faculty with him at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. He was my handball partner and asked me to address the Catholic Biblical Association on the subject of my doctoral dissertation, "The Suffering Servant in the Gospel According to John." We faculty members were privileged to have such a genius in our midst. He graciously gave us his unpublished notes on The One God and the Triune God in the Old and New Testaments. I feel his greatest contribution was his monumental work on the writings listed here:

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN, two volumes, Raymond E. Brown, The Anchor Yale Bible, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1966, 1970.

THE EPISTLES OF JOHN, Raymond E. Brown, The Anchor Yale Bible, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1982.

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## INTRODUCTION

I want to base my life on love because I believe love is my basic nature. Love attracts me telling me something of what I am. I believe every act of every human being is motivated by love, because it is always done as good for someone or something. Even murder, although wrong and misguided, is seen as right or good by the perpetrator. The heart has no rules, and so love has to be harnessed. But when we allow unconditional love to be our stimulant, it transforms us from within. I need to ask, "Can love satisfy me? Can I trust love to fulfill me?" Answering these questions takes me beyond the narrow confines of self and ego. By love I mean love of God and of my neighbor.

If love is my goal, I want to face the questions that arise and give my answers. For my own peace of mind, I need to be conscious and explicit about this. That is what I intend to do in the first two Chapters: 1 Questions I Ask, and 2 Answers I Give. With that as a ground, in Chapters 3

to 6, I uncover what I AM. Each one of us is a precious jewel with many facets, and in these Chapters I want to explore our many aspects. I think each of us has the urge to discover and grow into our greatest potential. I want to be open to all the eminence I can achieve, and so I entitle Chapter 6 "THAT: Shooting For The Stars." And at the end, in Chapter 7, I offer what I think Jesus would say to us today.

I ask the reader to see what unfolds in a journey of adventure to many different ports, but each as a port of entry into your own Self. Sail through the sun and storms and fog of your own life that have obscured the clarity of your Self, of who you really are. Perhaps you already did this in other parts of your life. Here you can see something of your past or present which you are free to explore. You can go to where you have never been before. Revere yourself for the power and potential that is you. What I have written is still a source of inspiration for me.

# 1 QUESTIONS I ASK

How much can my concept of God embrace?

- All the good, all the beauty, all the joy, all the love in the world?
- Does it include the greed of many business men?
- Does it include the hate of a murderer? The lust of a prostitute? The darkness of a child molester? The fear and unknowing of the child?
- The subjugation of women from time immemorial?
- The innumerable men, women, and children killed in war, after war, after war?
- The enslavement of millions over the centuries?
- The corruption of rulers of state?
- The intolerance of dictators?

- The sins committed in the name of religion?
- Human sacrifices in the name of religion?
- The arrogance of many churchmen?
- The brutal treatment and senseless killing of animals worldwide?
- Do I exclude anything from God's loving care?
- Do I resent people and what they have done, and so removed them from God's all-inclusive plan?
- How I view these conditions gives me a better understanding of myself. If I aspire to an all-consuming love of God, how do I answer them?
- When I see on television or read in the paper the horrible crimes that are committed daily, am I facing an impenetrable wall?
- How can this happen? How can people do this? How can anyone tolerate it or explain it? There are so many sordid facts. Is it possible to uncover some truth behind them? Perhaps the endless injustices and suffering should not surprise us.
- There's a devil as well as an angel in everyone, and each of us manifests one or the other. Jesus said he came not to bring peace but the sword, to turn one man against another, even within the same family (Matthew 10:34). It is the natural consequence if one chooses to love and his neighbor chooses to not love. It cannot be otherwise as long as I do not see

every other human being as my brother or sister. It seems that it has to be this way until each of us comes to our senses and to our hearts.

- Perhaps the acid test of true love is whether or not I can I take the world as it is into myself! In a certain sense the world is as I see it. How do I see it? Before all else the knowing/loving entity within me is the primary reality. I can only work with the world as I see the world. My skills define me. Will and love must be brought to that, to myself, before the world can change.
- It is senseless to ask, "Why does God permit this?" The pertinent question is, "Why do we permit it?" The need of another summons our love; this is how God needs us.
- Can my concept include the patience of God, waiting, waiting to turn every one of us billions, one by one, into Himself? It takes time for the mind to catch up to the heart. Can it take eternity?
- Concepts can never cover the Reality of God. We try to see the big picture, but who can see the whole picture? I must unfold from within to the inexpressible love beyond all thoughts. Is my mind sturdy enough to survive living in my heart?
- I must be as much of God as I can be, taking on and bearing the suffering of the world. John the Baptist saw Jesus as the Suffering Servant of God and the

Paschal Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.  
Does Oneness call me to living the same?

There is a soft part of my makeup, but I cannot get to it unless I let go of my ego. I have to change my will and accept a higher will. Can I do that? I say to myself, "Let go. Let God." Then I am open to the Ever-Greater God.

There is great joy and peace of mind in loving the Unknown when I know the Unknown is all good. The Unknown is fascinating and exhilarating. To communicate the Reality of the Unknown in human terms, we use thoughts and words. There is an immensity here beyond measurement, an expanse outside all description. That Unknown, that immensity, is myself, my love, for that expanse is love. Such love is unlimited. People fight and kill for what they love. Put positively, every act is performed out of love. Nothing can be excluded from my love. In this grand expanse, all divisions and distinctions disappear. I am one with everything. We are talking about our very being, and being is always here and now. The only thing that never ends is the present moment. Eternity is now.

No subject too great, no thing too small, to be the object of my love. No thoughts are needed anymore.

One of my favorite quotations is what Jesus said from the cross just before he died, "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing," (Luke 23:34). If God forgives such a horrific crime as the crucifixion of His son, cannot any crime be forgiven? I believe it can and actually takes place, for I cannot see an all-merciful God

condemning anyone for all eternity. If people do not know what they are doing, that in itself is a reason for forgiveness. I trust love; and since I do, I have to trust someone or something above and beyond me that everything and everyone is lovable. I believe in a perfect plan programmed by love. I believe that we will all end up in heaven eventually, although some of us individuals may spend a long time in the hell of our own making.

Jesus gives a key to this compassionate understanding in what he says on the cross about ignorance, as noted above. We are conditioned pilgrims, mostly formed by others in our early years to act and react a certain way. Some of us have been buried under layers of self-serving education hiding our own truth. Painful experiences of childhood are enveloped in emotion. Later in life we look at those experiences, good or bad, with an adult and rational mind, which often cannot break the emotional shell encasing them. Take away the conditioning and stripped down to one's deepest nature, the greedy business man becomes a philanthropist, the sex predator becomes a counselor, the robber becomes a donor, the prostitute a virgin, the murderer a physician, the clergyman's arms open to all, the lost soul is found and is free. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool," (Isaiah, 1: 18). I can see such a person shorn of all his old dirty garments and redressed in fresh clothing to enter a new life. The human spirit finds its own way out of a period of darkness. Everybody has some mishap, some loss, some hurdle, but we keep going. Every action is seen as good for someone or for something, and that is love. But

the offender has to take charge and tailor his own remaking. No matter how stunted a person might be from mistreatment growing up, the boy who was not knighted can become king.

## 2 ANSWERS I GIVE

"Stillness is the language God speaks,  
everything else is a bad translation."  
—Eckhart Tolle.

I have admired Tolle's wisdom since first reading his statement. I think God keeps quiet because He wants to hear what we say.

I need to formulate for myself a satisfactory answer to the world I live in. I try to explain things to satisfy my mind. It brings only momentary pleasure because deeper down I know that reality is unable to be defined or adequately described. Death is the constant reminder that I do not and cannot control life. I do believe and trust something undefinable and beyond what any church can adequately explain. But if I can hold together three forces it gives me a hopeful outlook on what may otherwise seem a deplorable situation.

The first force is timeless and spaceless reality, the inexhaustible source of all that is, which is the home I already have. It is God's eternal plan of love for all mankind. I join my "I AM" to the "I AM" that Jesus brings us, which I will elaborate here and in the following chapters.

I would like to summarize three key sources for reporting on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. I start with Matthew, a Jewish tax collector who became an apostle of Jesus. Of the Synoptic Gospels he was the first to write; he wrote his Gospel in Palestine for Christians converted from Judaism. From the Aramaic ("the Hebrew tongue"), it was then translated into Greek. For our purposes here, I give a key passage of his:

"Not one sparrow falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows," (Matthew 10:29).

The second scriptural source is Luke, a medical man of pagan origin, probably born in Antioch. He accompanied Paul on Paul's second and third missionary journeys and was with him during his two Roman captivities. For this reason his Gospel, the third to be written, could claim the authority of Paul. Paul was a Pharisee who had the name of Saul before his conversion. The original language for his Gospel is Greek. Luke explains how we are cared for:

"Consider the lilies of the field; they never have to spin or weave. Yet I assure you, not even Solomon in all

his glory was robed like one of these. Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, how much more will he look after you, you men of little faith!" (Luke 12: 27-28).

The third source I choose to show God's abiding love for us is the Gospel According to John. The work of this greatly rewarding and complex Gospel seems to have occurred over a period of time with various authors and/or sources making their own contributions. The claim in the Gospel itself is that it is the work of an eye-witness, a "Beloved Disciple" of the Lord. The Gospel could have been edited and published later by the Apostle John's disciples. It appears certain that the historical tradition underlying the Gospel goes back to 40-60. The first edition may have appeared between 70 and 85. Recent scholarship sets the outermost limits for the final form of the Fourth Gospel between 75 and 110, with strong evidence pointing to between 90 and 100. It appears that the various contributors wanted to assure the reader that nothing of the original life and teaching of Jesus was lost. They wanted to preserve for themselves and others what they witnessed or heard. I choose to include here only what I consider to be an indispensable core of Jesus' teaching:

"I am in my Father and you in me and I in you....If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him," (John 14: 20-23). Jesus is saying that my home is with God.

A passage from the Epistles of John rounds out what I consider the essential foundation of Jesus' teaching:

“No one has ever seen God.  
Yet if we love one another,  
God abides in us;  
and His love has reached perfection in us.  
This is how we know that we abide in Him  
and He abides in us: in that He has given us  
of His own Spirit.”

The author makes divine indwelling dependent on and expressed by our loving one another. He also dares to say that this divine indwelling gives a greater intimacy with God than seeing Him. Common indwelling, life, and love are but different facets of the basic union binding Father, Son and believer. It is helpful to note that for much of John's Gospel, “knowing” and “believing” are interchangeable.

What helps is that awareness and love are already rooted in my being. Both are timeless, here and now, beyond any dimensions or restrictions. Enlightened persons come to our aid here. I'll quote two renowned spiritual writers, one medieval and one modern, to show how their works compare with what I have recorded. To me, they substantiate what has been said so far regarding this first force, that of God's eternal plan.

I take Meister Eckhart's words from MEISTER ECKHART, The essential sermons, commentaries, treatises, and defense. Eckhart says, "Therefore, God so

created the world that he still without ceasing creates it....A good man, insofar as he is good, has God's attributes....For what he loves, that is God, Father, Unbegotten; and he who loves is God, Son, Begotten....The innermost and highest part of the soul creates and receives God's Son and becoming-God's-Son in the bosom and heart of the heavenly Father."

I take Wilber's words from his book, *THE EYE OF SPIRIT*, "The realization of the Nondual traditions is uncompromising: there is only Spirit, there is only God, there is only Emptiness in all its radiant wonder....There is nothing but God, nothing but Goddess, nothing but Spirit in all directions, and not a grain of sand, not a speck of dust, is more or less Spirit than any other." The conclusion I draw from this is that everything is God, not as He/She is, but as it is. I can affirm it, know it to be true, yet always open to a greater understanding of it. Nothing prevents me, however, from loving this sublime reality.

I can know there is a source but not know what that source is. It cannot be adequately perceived but can be experienced. I strongly believe in the power of conviction based on direct experience. And the immediate experience comes not through thought but without thought. Knowing the self well, the being that I am, clears the mind of thought and opens consciousness to greater realities. In pure awareness I am aloof and unconcerned with mind and body. I need to discard self-identification with what I am not. What remains is all-embracing love. When I am love I am beyond space and time and participate in the source of all that is. Awareness is love in action springing from my

being which is love. Love precedes all else. In loving one I love all, and in loving all I love each. The self is then inexhaustible and endless, the realization of I AM. Being is unlimited.

“The purpose of the heart is to know yourself to be yourself and one with God,”-Edgar Cayce.

I keep asking myself, “Is my mind sturdy enough to survive living in my heart?”

Thus, the first force operating in the world is God’s plan for us, as I outlined above. The second force or principle operating is the "I AM." The one self-evident fact which doesn't have to be proven is "I AM." "I AM" is the overwhelming truth of life. It's the music always playing to which I add words of my own choosing. To be honest, anything I add needs to serve the primary truth of "I AM."

I think it is obvious from what has been said that the divine plan cannot proceed without us. If we look back to “Questions I Ask” in Chapter 1, we see how the plan has been vitiated time and again by the wayward actions of men through the centuries. Man’s inhumanity to man shows the deplorable depths to which man can sink.

The answer and the solution is within ourselves. I like what Carl Jung reminds us of:

“Who looks outside, dreams;  
Who looks within, awakes.”

We each have to do something with what we have, and we already have what we need. Will power means there is power within. The buck stops with each of us.

“We all have a better guide in ourselves, if we would attend to it, than any other person can be,”-Jane Austen.

Mahatma Gandhi taught a poignant lesson in his Christmas message, January 31, 1931. It showed me how at times it is entirely up to me whether I let my innate goodness come forth or not, regardless of what any outside authority says:

“I should not care if it was proved by someone that the man called Jesus never lived, and that what was narrated in the Gospels was a figment of the writer’s imagination. For the Sermon on the Mount would still be true for me.”

Gandhi found words to live by regardless of external circumstances and of who said them. It revealed the conviction in Gandhi’s heart.

As I live something or someone usually commands my attention. When I allow the newcomer to rule me, such as when I follow someone's direction, it gives me a feeling of belonging, of security. A new stream enters the current of my life. Joined to the newcomer I feel safer and not alone, but in its wake the ego is born. And the ego substitutes as Self (I AM) to become a new but false center.

It is easy to lose our way, and perhaps we all do in some way at some time. If and when it happens, Rumi tells us how to regain the true nature of "I AM":

"Love is  
The water of life,  
Step inside.  
Every drop  
Of this sea  
Holds the promise  
Of a different life."

The third force or element that helps my understanding of life is the divine/human concurrence of oneness ending duality, which may be the most mysterious part on how all are becoming one. Man has free will operative throughout his experiences. As already said, you and I are God, not as He is but as you and I are. If I want my being to be more like God's Being, I have to allow not only all the good in the world but also all the evil. In that, I am just allowing free will to play out as one of the three great forces. Pleasure and pain are inevitable.

There is a golden or magnetic thread that connects all of us. Whatever I do, I am never alone. There is always divine concurrence, though I am not always in agreement with it. One strand of the golden thread is my uniqueness in alignment to hold it all together. I can be one only by a loving openness within me to accept it. My greatness is

within me and I must follow my own path. This is the warm or human side to God in wanting his glory and love to unfold and blossom as my uniqueness, my personal experience.

What could lead us into a better understanding of concurring forces is the possibility of what has been called universal consciousness. It states that there is a single, intelligent Consciousness permeating the entire Universe. It means I am part of something larger than myself that I cannot claim as my private possession. Many times I forget my connection with the natural world of people, animals, and things. What is essential is a sensitivity to the whole, an awareness that does not end. It is a kind of reciprocal identity. I love the quote from Ibn Arabi, Sufi mystic, poet and philosopher who died 1240: "God sleeps in the rock, dreams in the plant, stirs in the animal, and awakens in man." Whether actual or playful, Ibn's comment makes me realize the vast possibilities available.

We live all the time with concurring forces creating new life. We know that two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen under the right conditions become water. A little pine cone, washed by the rain and kissed by the sun, falls asleep in the earth. It carries the favorable environment and the bonding lasts as long as it lives. And so it grows into a giant redwood living for hundreds of years. A man and a woman coming together sexually, and hopefully in love, create a new born. But what is also born at the same time is a father and a mother. New life creates new relationships.

We know something about concurring powers, but little about concurring spirits. Speculation has been made about an irresistible force meeting an immovable object. Here, at least, the irresistible force that is God does meet a moveable object of man's free will. Are there limits to this coming together? How far will it extend? How much of God's infinity can I realize? How much of his knowledge? How about his goodness and love and mercy? Does Oneness have a limit? Life goes on after death. Isn't each one of us to experience this transformation of self? How long will it take? Since I AM God, not as He is but as I AM, how much am I capable of? It's an exciting mystery not just to explore but to live and to love. What a destiny for each of us! There are questions we have with no easy answers. We do have a springboard into the mystery, however, in that we know God shares his being with us and his one commandment is to love. It is possible to trust and love the Unknown. Maybe I am making things complicated where simplicity is required.

To conclude, these are the three principles that play out in the womb of God: 1) the divine offering, 2) the "I AM" rooted in free will, 3) the ongoing interplay of the two. The divine plan of love and goodness as an ultimate solution may be interrupted by man's doing for a while in a space/time framework. I have to look beyond space and time to eternity, to beyond what the mind can only suggest. With the three forces operating, I conclude that what happens must needs be so. All have to play out their roles. At least for now. Things as they are, are unavoidable. Spirit prevails. The three are manifestations of Spirit just as they are. I don't have to like it but I can accept it, and acceptance

is the beginning of love. The world has to work its way out, and so do I. I often suffer from not accepting what befalls me and moving on. Everything in some way contributes to the ultimate perfection. We are all meant to be perfect, and one way or another, at the proper time, we will reach our goal. Man's actions may be obstructive, but they cannot frustrate the overall divine plan forever. Ultimately only God exists and shares His being with us so that there is only one I AM. The love that is my basic nature unites with God Who Is Love. I and all else are IN God.



### **3 RENEWED GLIMPSES**

Love can begin anywhere and with anything. Love is there and always possible, for it has many different faces. God does speak at times in many different ways, in nature, in others, and especially in our mind and heart, but we have to learn how to listen. I like to look inside and notice how I change. I think we'll all end up by becoming what we really are: the great I AM ONE with God. I no longer resist the changes that come over me, but I live through them as well as I can. It's really letting life live through me. God has breathed into each one of us His Spirit, and it's up to me to discover it and work with it, letting it become my spirit.

Giving is a great way to love. Research is showing that love is part of our nature, for the reward centers of the brain are stimulated and light up when we give. What we're doing, giving, makes us feel good inside. We get something back. When we feel rewarded, we're more likely to do it again. So it appears that we are hardwired to give. It gets us out of our heads and brings us closer together. So much is accomplished no matter how little or how much we give.

The giving can take the form of money, donating our blood, lending our time, offering our expertise, or any personal act the giver cares to engage in. Good will out. It may not even be thought about as love. Another name for it is good-will. Other names also come to mind: acceptance, patience, kindness, forgiveness, compassion. A rose by any other name still has the same beauty and fragrance.

Each one of us is a raw diamond waiting to be cut and polished. Each one of our facets is different and unique from those of others. We usually want to be loved the way we ourselves would love. Disregarding differences is dishonoring God's providential plan. Honoring our differences can be the beginning of loving others.

The purpose of duality is to bring the two together in love. Reality is already one awaiting our recognition which is enlightenment. Multiplicity and diversity can perk our interest and bring joy.

God deals with me separately and individually. Unfinished as I am, God is busy completing my work, and is fully engaged with me. Sometimes the hardest one to love and forgive is myself. I need to appreciate and admire my inner self. In this context I like to think of Wordsworth's "inner eye" explained in his poem "I wandered lonely as a cloud." While walking one day, the poet comes upon a crowd of daffodils and is entranced by them "Fluttering and dancing in the breeze." Later, when relaxing at home, he recalls the incident:

"For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,

They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils,"

By looking within at any time, Wordsworth can relish the "miracle" taking place and enter a state of joy. I think it is very important to ask, "Do I really love myself the way I should?" Too often we love the wrong thing about ourselves. It is not easy to love in a way best for others and my own ultimate good. The world and other human beings are a constant challenge for me. Can I truly love God and really know Him if I do not love His creation? Hate and fear are always ready to step in, without the person realizing that they are the sickness within. Only love will purify the heart.

Spiritual writers often say that to really understand something you have to become it, such as, if you want to grasp what love is, you have to be love. Such a statement is easier for me to understand if put this way: "To fathom what love is, I must be a lover." Love is not something understood by thinking; it must be experienced.

Very few of us will commit a major crime or serve a jail sentence. Knowing this can lead to a false sense of security and superiority. For almost all of us will commit a transgression that detracts from the best that we can do, or we will reject the opportunity to be the best that we can be. We fail to love in little ways that impede our growth and perhaps the betterment of our neighbor. It's the little things that bring us down.

Everything I need is inside me. The whole world is there waiting. Whatever is needed is already done for me. I need to uncover that first step and not worry where it will lead me. The spiritual journey is without risks, except for what is not really me. When I started looking for love, I started to change within and without. By loving, I not only know myself, I know God. In all that I do it is the heart, with or without love, that makes the difference. It is possible to let intentions follow the heart. At times there is a vivid awareness that all is taking place within, not in the head but in my very being, in my total self.

Some call compassion and forgiveness the nature of Ultimate Reality. This quote makes me reflect on love as my ultimate nature.

I love asserting the value of love because I think love is often over-shadowed by mindfulness. Both are indispensable, but I think loving is a higher priority. Love has no limits in its depth or in its breadths of application. It can move in all directions and embrace all. Often forgotten is how love changes the way we see things, putting value on what is before us. Love with awareness quiets the old mind and gives us a new mind.

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### **The Challenge of Understanding Reality**

I came across these words of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, taken from his book, I AM THAT, referenced at the beginning of the book: "The real does not die, the

unreal never lived." He explains further: "Reality cannot be momentary. It is timeless." His words answered some questions I had but opened serious difficulties. These words are understandable if I see as unreal anything that passes away. Only what is real lasts forever. This means whatever begins must end. Everything time-based has no reality. Therefore, all sinning and evil exist only temporally and will have an end.

I AM continues in existence. Since consciousness and love arise out of my own being, they too will last forever. Consciousness is continuous. I asked, "Give me what is real; take away from me what is not real." My mental agony of trying to figure things out evaporated when love took my attention.

His book is one of the finest I have ever read and it has helped me immensely. I do need to comment on it, however, for my own peace of mind. Maharaj's words satisfy my universal sense to look at things from an absolute point of view. But I could never tell the mother of a murdered child that the atrocious act is unreal! Such a remark would be cruel and lack all compassion. Willingness to be with what is---with the I AM as well as with human suffering---is generated by acceptance of what is, that is, by love. Both situations ask my love.

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## **Imprint**

I am autonomous. God cannot reveal Himself to me except in terms of my own reaction to His revelation.

All that I am ever aware of occurs within the realm of my own consciousness.

I am God, not as He is, but as I am. I know God according to and as my individual self.

That is why God belongs only to me.  
There is nothing that is not God,  
Who creates possibility, then makes things possible.  
The Supreme greets my nakedness.  
My Father clothes me with today  
Giving me my life as  
His personal experience:  
"Let it be loving."

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## **Human History**

"For Thine is the Kingdom  
—God Himself is the King.  
"And the Power"  
—His is the power that makes me a prince.  
"And the Glory"  
—Living His and my Kingly Nature.

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## **The Next Age**

When the windows of space open  
    To other spiritual beings,  
Where we are in love  
    Will determine where we will go  
Together.

---

## **God is Love**

Lack of love is the only darkness that exists.

Love IS overcoming.

"Father forgive them, for they don't know  
what they are doing."

Forgiving Spirit hovers over all.

Surrender and Be Love as you are loved.

---

## **Oneness**

I held the paper tissue in my hands, trying to separate the two plies with my fingertips. I asked, "Are we one?" and the plies came apart immediately. Then I knew we were one, for my intention was that they should come apart if we were truly one. It showed me that divine

concurrence is joined to what I do. For my sake, Oneness  
needs my intention.

"God laughs at 'two,' "  
—Hafiz.

God is not there and I am here.

He transforms me from within.

God is my imperfection becoming perfect.

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### **Taken Care Of**

"Love says I will take care of you,"  
—Kabir.

But I felt alone and abandoned and cried out for help.  
Then I looked out my window and saw a beautiful sunset.  
A firefly streaked across the open space in front of me.  
And I knew I was loved and taken care of.

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### **Postage Stamps**

Saints, seers, gurus, yogis,  
Beautiful engravings on postage stamps  
I buy to take me to my destination.

There, I too, will become a stamp  
For others and myself.

But only if I let  
The Infinite Invisible Artist  
Paint my portrait,  
Creating the masterpiece of who I really am.

---

Enlightenment is conscious oneness lived in unconditional  
love. Is this the basis of mystical experiences?

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## INTERLUDE

I have been helped in my writing by a friend telling me I am pedantic and redundant. I think it's a nice way of saying I am long-winded. And so, I have created this and the following Chapters to let the whirlwind blow freely! Because you may find the reading hard and heavy, I suggest you take only a snap shot at a time.

What follows in Chapters 4, 5, 6 are dishes for different palates, all food to help satisfy hunger. What has been given thus far is a foretaste of what follows. But now you go to a banquet too large and unfamiliar to consume all at once. As the story moves along, as you see all the dishes set before you, follow your own tastes for what appeals to you. Take what pleases and leave the rest.

At times the following will seem repetitive as I hammer home different approaches to "I AM." Key concepts have frequent mention. I urge the reader to reflect and practice in your own way what is being said. There is much food for thought here that I have gathered from

others, which I took in only a small portion at a time. If you allow it, your "I AM" like mine is a constantly growing enterprise and you may need to give it time.

Thoughts are only objects in the mind. To understand reality we must get beyond them. Going beyond requires reverence for our own power and potential to grasp the whole and not just parts. Being, reality, is infinitely beyond any thought we might have.

Going beyond is often referred to as "higher consciousness." What that often amounts to is a different perception from what we are used to. How I see things, how I think, has a direct bearing on how I live my life. I need to ask, "Am I ready to change my mind?" So often we look outside and away from ourselves for fulfillment. Home is where the heart is, and each one of us has a heart that belongs to no one else. My heart must be big enough to include all of reality for ultimately all is one. We need others and that is good, that is the world we live in. But there can be no fulfillment unless it includes a blossoming within. Embracing anyone or anything always demands opening my own arms. When we bring the inside and the outside together we feel "at home."

Once we break through, we can rejoice in ourselves as God does in Himself. A great physicist of our time, Stephen Hawking, tried to find a "theory of everything" which would allow mankind to "know the mind of God." He further said, "It would not be much of a universe if it wasn't home to the people you love." I would like to add that my attempt is to shed a light on how each of us can

find a home within where we all can live in peace and love.

As the "I AM" unfolds, I suggest to let yourself become an explorer, yearning to see what's beyond the next horizon, as the early sailors to the new world had done. The new territory may be unknown and unchartered, yet exhilarating and inviting.

Sometimes understanding dawns in a most surprising way: "My I AM is so great I can be a home to all."



## **4 THE POWERS OF I AM: WITNESSING & LOVING**

I see two ways of getting to where we want to be: the way of witnessing and the way of loving. And since all is one, I must bring these two together. Witnessing is not thinking. In fact, I cannot watch and think at the same time. The way of witnessing uses the mind and eventually drops it to get beyond it. Love more than anything else gets me beyond. My becoming, (I AM), follows love. Words and thoughts are similar in that they are limited. For example, the word "apple." I can't hold the word or eat the word. It conveys an idea to get beyond it. It acquires its true meaning only with the actual tasting and eating. Similarly, we have the words and talk about witnessing, love, oneness, God, etc. And instead of experiences we have definitions and explanations, more words and ideas. Any discipline or religion shows its true face in how its food is digested. How am I changed which results in action? The self is not known by words or thoughts. I can't read my way to it or think my way to it because I am it.

Pure witnessing dissolves thinking. By focusing, by simply watching and following my breath, I sense my whole being rising to a higher level of consciousness. It's more comprehensive and peaceful and often suffused in light. I sense myself to be part of something greater than myself of which I am a part. It's like a dream coming true. Meditation softens the edges of myself and of the world around me, and the separating barriers come down. Deep awareness is nondual because in it thoughts don't exist, and there is no perception of time. My mind falls into silence because I am not bombarded with thoughts. Silencing the mind allows a new light to shine and new knowledge radiates within. In the stillness of consciousness immersed in light and love, I come to a recognition of my true nature. Ultimately, I am the nondual Self. Identifying the Self with the mind/body gives pleasure or pain, makes me happy or sad, and sidetracks me from what I really am. The mind cannot go beyond itself. Mind just gives more mind. Only direct insight and experience reveal what I truly am.

Light is an ongoing mystery. The same is true of consciousness. They appear boundless and not part of the material world. Light's vastness and pervasiveness are a source of wonder. At times I can feel my smallness being absorbed into the light so that I am light. Our minds find it difficult to comprehend the nature of light. The same can be said of consciousness. Einstein said he wanted to spend the rest of his life studying what light is. I found that light brings wonder, peace, and acceptance.

Consciousness equals awareness and love.  
Whatever a person does seems reasonable, a good idea, to

the one doing it. I can't do anything without thinking it is good for someone or something. That is love! What is needed is to get my priorities straight, to harness that love. In the stillness, when I am freed from fear and judgment, unconditional love arises. I am no longer conditioned by the needs and worries of the separate self. Plain consciousness is pure love.

Witnessing and love establishes me in the here and now, out of the past and out of the future. And since the only thing that never ends is the present moment, awareness and love situates me in space/time as well as in the beyond. Can I see it that way? Pure witnessing coupled with loving implants me in God's overall plan. We live in two worlds, one is our temporary home, the other our permanent abode. The one is made up of body and mind, the other of spirit and being. One is in space and time, the other in eternity. One passes, the other surpasses. The less we feel at home in one, the more we reside in the other.

I go from a technique to an inexpressible state of awareness. Literal execution passes into a transcendent level. Something actually happens beyond the ordinary, a going from the particular to the universal. I sense myself realizing something from within. Internal life is so full it takes over. It's breath-taking and so sublime I know that I am bordering on the Infinite. There is something uncreated in me. Call it spirit, soul, light, being or whatever. I like to think of it as God meeting God as I am. It's now but more than now. It's not a record of experience but experience itself.

To bring about "the other," we have to practice. Thinking about it is a start until we feel something of its magnetic power. The inner contentment arises and becomes so powerful all else pales in its presence. We don't need things to make us happy. Following this path there is ever more to discover: I find ignorance fading away; the mystery of suffering is not so troubling; I don't fully understand the purpose of life but I know I can trust it. Consciousness of so many lesser things passes away while awareness and love take over. Awareness and love want to increase. The practice I choose when I am alone is meditation, prayer and silence. I try to balance that by going out to people in a caring way when I'm with others.

In witnessing we are talking about what can be a form of meditation. A strong practice for some is living in the emptiness they experience. It helps them get rid of thoughts and opens them to the unknown. Whatever method one chooses, the attempt is to get to reality. A great help is the conviction that I will get there. A greater help is that all will get there. Many do not like and shirk the consequences of finding and living the true Self; it may destroy the former life one had.

I have lived through periods of emptiness. I found it difficult but it revealed much to me that was for my benefit. Each must find his or her own way. No two of us are the same, and no two of us grow the same way. What eased the way for me was making love paramount. I quickly found that the way other people love may not be my way. I had to answer the question, "Is my mind sturdy enough to survive living in my heart?" I am the answer to the world's

salvation only through my own means of loving. I trusted love to get me over any walls I put up between myself and others.

For my meditation I was greatly helped by Atisha (982-1054), an enlightened Tibetan Buddhist master. He wanted to show how different paths could be practiced together. I fully explained his method in my previous book, "MARKS AND REMARKS, Inspirations To Live By." Here I give a brief summary of his technique.

Atisha says, "Grasp the principle of two witnesses." By watching the mind, the mind disappears. By watching the witness, he continues, the witness expands and becomes universal. Energy follows attention. The first step is negative to get rid of the mind. The second step is positive to get rooted in ultimate consciousness, which is often called God or Nirvana or the Infinite or the Supreme, or the All, or the Nameless, or whatever one chooses. Watching the witness takes you to the door of what you really are!

I could easily surrender and trust the love I experienced in meditation, but I quickly learned that it meant accepting and trusting whatever comes in my life. Again I was confronted with the inner and the outer world. Both contribute, but I have to choose daily that the inner journey is the primary way of life for me. It is a Royal Highway to the discovery of the Self One with all. The inner adventure recalls for me an episode from the life of Joan of Arc. Joan was a mystic who said she had visions and heard voices directing her to lead the French army against the British in The Hundred Years War. At her trial,

the bishop declared that her experiences were all in her head. Joan is reported to have answered, "Yes, my Lord, where else could they be?" Joan gave priority to what she was experiencing within, even to the point of being burned at the stake.

Sometimes we have to take a hard look at ourselves and convince ourselves of what is better to do. One way or another, love will out. It has been said many times that God cannot be known but He/She can be loved. God is love, and who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. And that love becomes our experience, pure goodness finding its way. There is an actualization of the heart acknowledging Pure Goodness pointing to my potential for good. Love and compassion are how God acts towards me; love and compassion are my very nature. Sometimes when I feel guilt, it is triggered by my knowing that I need to be loving and caring and I am not. Love is the ground of being. To love, I have to want to love. There must be the mental/volitional ground to enact love. It may be spontaneous toward something that attracts me, or it may not be that easy. Acceptance is the key, acceptance of the way I am made, body, soul, mind and spirit. Acceptance is also the beginning of love. For the good to permeate the world, it must emerge from within each of us. This is how the world gets better, the inner helping and changing the outer.

I need to constantly remind myself that all is one. I experience the world by what is going on in me. I am, and all is within me. I can begin by wording it. Thinking about it would come next. And slowly some feeling could wrap

itself around the notion. Finally, I would begin to act under its guidance. Would it not take an eternity to grow into the All? Could it not be that this realization in me and in everyone is forever? The oneness of it all is beyond the attainment of the mind. It is also beyond the witness, although witnessing is necessary to get there. The awareness of conditions takes us to the unconditioned.

We do not understand the beauty and power of unconditional love. It is an ancient technique of healing one's self and others. Real love has that power, but only when we are deeply in touch with our own heart. Love will allow me to see myself in all and all in myself. While witnessing and loving carry me forward, my very being is something that embraces both and yet is greater: I AM. Pure being is my natural state. This is the discovery of self that breaks through all barriers of space and time. The last barrier to be broken may be the limitation of my mind.



## 5 I AM THAT

My potential is infinite and my possibilities endless. The end will not be thwarted by anything. It is up to us to set things right. I like to think of the world as a boat buoyed up and being carried along in its inevitable passage. While we in the craft have our own work to do, nothing can torpedo or undermine the ship's inescapable destiny. And the goal for each of us is not a thing as we know it, but something far greater and more wonderful. The illusion that I am body/mind has to be dispelled. Once the limitations of space and time are transcended, death is just a part of living and not to be feared. Fear resides in the head. Love lives in the heart giving courage to commit. Our goal is to get from one to the other.

Our Being is ever pulling us to go higher, deeper. I had a dream about this in which I found myself swimming in deep water. Any coastline that I could see was beyond what I could swim to. I got extremely frightened and thought I would drown. In my panic I stopped swimming. In letting my legs drop, my feet touched bottom, and I

realized the water wasn't that deep. I could stand in water up to my neck. The fear left me and I began walking toward the shore. I went from fearing to trusting. The dream taught me that the mind is restless and I am meant for something beyond what the mind can supply. The searchings of the mind must give way eventually to direct experience and the Unknown. I must find what it is that I never lost.

Religion or a spiritual practice is like a planet in space. It can be explored and its riches brought out for years or for centuries. But I am space itself and all that is in it, with its limits unknown. The sky and more is my home. Consciously or unconsciously, however, some sense of here and now is always with me. Space and time are within me. If I identify with my body, then I am limited to space and time.

In silence and peace I am aware that something of me is beyond space and time. Quieting the mind gives me a truer picture of reality. Thoughts disengage and the mind's structuring of old comes apart. I see that a part of me goes beyond the known and it is comforting to welcome the Unknown. The new reality grows and becomes a tangible presence, becomes more of me than I could have imagined. As beyond space and time, I see myself as all-embracing and invincible. Perhaps the unknown itself will give way to pure being! It is like something stuck in my head but I am not able to explain it. As has been said, to know something you have to be it. If I am beyond space and time it means I am beyond what happens in space and beyond what

happens in time. But for now I live in space/time and am accountable for my life while there.

If "I AM" is beyond space and time, what I am made of, my own constitution, can take me there. Eckhart Tolle says in his book, *STILLNESS SPEAKS*, "Your innermost sense of self, of who you are, is inseparable from stillness. This is the I AM that is deeper than name and form." Vital things attract us, as thoughts do incessantly. Stillness and silence aren't considered vital, so they have little interest for us, at least at first. We become wiser when we get insight into the power of stillness and silence. Stillness for me is when I am in a totally witnessing stance without thoughts. I have long known we can't watch and think at the same time. With eyes closed in meditation, the senses turned off, thoughts gone, I fall back into a nondual stand of consciousness which makes comprehension unattainable. Here I am beyond the perceivable or conceivable. Any sense of otherness does not exist. All is here now. In that state, I don't think I could even make a decision to end it. Once out of that state, many things become clear. I never knew that thoughtlessness could be so peaceful. It's a great consolation knowing I am more than I can conceive.

Being, knowing, loving are all one, just as being and becoming are one and inseparable. The beginning and ending go on forever, moving toward liberation and perfection. They all are part of the "I AM." I dare not think that the boundary of my mortal mind is the boundary of the Infinite that I sense at times. I believe the more I accept this vast difference, the more I operate in emptiness, in the

void, in the Unmanifested Absolute. Call it what I will, names are only pointers to the unknown and unexplainable.

Consciousness without an object is the atrium to what I really am. Any thing in consciousness is what I am not. The atrium is consciousness of emptiness, of spaciousness, of the awareness of non-perception because AMNESS rules. It's an awareness beyond consciousness. My life and wellness are determined ultimately not by my consciousness but by my being, by my Amness which includes the "I." The result is a presence. While I know, I also don't know. I waffle between knowing and not knowing. While there is an abiding awareness of not knowing the fullness of what I really am, I can appreciate and love the mystery as it is. I can love that over which the mind has no power.

I need to give weight to what I really am, and that is awareness with love. It will give me food and energy, and something of the substance of the unknown reveals itself. Life, light and love are energizing stations on the way. The wonder of life, limitless light beyond the material world, irresistible love, each has fuel for me to go beyond.

As experienced by mystics, any one of these three encapsulates part of the whole announcing what I really am. Light, love or life acts as a universal solvent dissolving all lesser subjects such as thoughts and words, inside and outside, time and eternity, life and death. The melting pot, the new reality, absorbs all. What is sometimes experienced is the deep line between fact and fiction, between what I am and what I am not. And it is known that many fall into the

chasm. Light, love or life can act as a surge, a resurgence, an emergence in our consciousness like clouds forming and reforming in the sky and opening to a transcendence beyond. And it can go on and on in us. To get to a higher level of consciousness I have to want it. I have to willingly let go of staying with lower levels. Some feel they have to remake the light, love or life, refashioning it into their own life's circumstances, and return it to its source.

My I AM is something beyond even the three. They are knowledgeable things of the mind, perhaps experienced in a state of higher consciousness, but knowledge of the mind is still only temporary. Love, light and life give a taste of the good, the true and the beautiful so that we want more of the same. We would like to have them without time or limitation of any kind.

Rumi gives the source of why these three are limitless while still preserving the mystery:

"You are the letter  
Written by God,  
  
You are the mirror  
That reflects the divine,  
  
Seek inside for  
All you want is all you are.  
  
There is nothing  
Above and beyond."

What greater confirmation can we have of the inestimable wonder of who we are, of our own "I AM"? I

go from time to the timeless, from structure to formlessness, to a flowering of my nature that surpasses all understanding. An inner distillation takes place, a kind of purifying process in which the unnecessary evaporates. Limitations are gone. I willingly see and discard what I am not. What is left is a drink of the Unknown now given to me as a taste. So my true I AM is both known and unknown. It's a personal indicator that leaves no doubt. It brings such comfort and conviction that I know it is the home of my soul. It's a sense of belonging here and now. A loving awareness of pure bliss makes me feel right at home. The deep peace tells me I can trust what is going on within. As an unfolding of myself, I am also its cause. It seems that my identity is ever joyfully expanding. It's a dream coming true. My home is me.

The dominating I AM may be reached in different ways, but a word of caution is necessary here because I can easily have a false sense of I AM. Anything that splits me from all reality is a sign that I am not pursuing the true I AM. I am already one with everything that exists. "I am myself," is a sign I am going in the right direction. When I say I am a writer or I am a teacher, I have to be careful that I am not moving outside by trying to find an ego comfort zone. Creating two where there's one is always a mistake. I don't need to seek an identification of myself, for that already exists in the unique being that I AM.

"I AM" is a carrier or vehicle between the inner and the outer, between the real and the appearance. I see "I AM" as a road sign, a sign of love calling me to attention. I can go either of two ways. By identifying with the body or

with what's in my mind, I am carried to the appearance or away from my true self. In the other direction, I go toward naked awareness of being. Without identifying with the body or the mind, without being this or that, I am free. I enter another state, a different land of being. In the light of pure consciousness there are no thoughts, what some call emptiness or nothingness.

Whatever works to keep from identifying with the mind or body is a step in the right direction. How I treat the thoughts that arise is a key to the true or false I AM. Consciousness is a replica of the world, and so the world exists in me. This is where awareness with love plays a dominating role.

The very fact of "seeking" easily makes me a self-separate trying to find my identity outside myself. Seeking can give a false sense of humility or a "poor me" attitude. At some point seeking must give way to finding, the discovery that I already have all that I need. I merely have to uncover it. To know and recognize the truth of my being must come from direct and immediate experience of myself. Our mind is so clouded with thought after thought and seeking after seeking, that it is difficult to rest in the ever-present Presence of my own being. Jesus shows our own divinity when he says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," because that is the voice of God's Kingdom within each of us. I am called to be home to myself as Jesus was home to Himself in realizing his Divinity. Seeking outside myself ends when I realize I am the way, the truth, and the life. Purely human consciousness giving way to divine consciousness is everyone's secret.

Self-realization comes with understanding what I am; I am an ever-expanding being. It is a deepening and enlarging of self-awareness. I need to go beyond thoughts and be nothing but what I am. It is I AM's assertion of openness to whatever comes to it is part of me. It is in the doing and not in the wording.

Our destiny is to move forward, and each step brings us closer to fuller realization. In every move we learn and discover. We can know with certainty that nothing can stop us. Words are only words, thoughts are only thoughts. Neither is what I truly am. Fear is of my imagination and not a part of what I truly am. Freed from all ideas, nothing is perceived, for I have come to realize the fullness of I am. I even break free from the mental state of "I am" into the reality of what that is. In it there is no separate I am. There is one Self, the only Self of all. The entire universe is rooted in being. All of it becomes me and I become all.

We keep trying to capture something wild and unimaginable, as I do in these writings, a reality that can never be corralled. Because we can harness a lion or the atom, we think we can do it with anything. God sees our plight and knows our longing, so he concretizes Himself for us in Jesus. But Jesus reminds us of the Absolute Otherness of God when he affirms that before anything came into existence, "I AM." His Otherness keeps reminding us that He/She/It is Something beyond the mind's power to grasp. Part of the real mystery is how God, while beyond anything we can know, HE/SHE/IT is still in all that exists. So, to conclude, God is both, other and here, and neither.

## **6 THAT: SHOOTING FOR THE STARS & BEYOND**

The Upanishads long ago recognized only one supreme soul, existing in everything and embodied in each. I can think of no firmer basis for the oneness of everything. In it there is no subject and object, no duality. Only where there is duality does one see another. Dwelling in man, the Supreme is the knowing subject and is called the Atman. As the knowing subject it can never become an object for us. In itself it is unknowable. We cannot see seeing, cannot hear hearing. The Atman is the sole reality for by it we know all. Immediate intuition sees all reality "inwoven and interwoven" in this unity of consciousness. This unity is further elaborated in three simple phrases: "I am THAT, you are THAT, all this is THAT." Summary: I AM. I AM what God is.

Since I am That, what greater love can the Universe/God/Life give me? It lets me become Him/Her/It

while remaining myself. It's not a contradiction, merely beyond ordinary thinking.

I am THAT which manifests in me as the witness, my multi-faceted consciousness. Whatever appears before me cannot be myself, my "I AM." If I impart my "I AM" to anything, such as "I am a writer," or "I am getting old," it is false and binds me to what I am not. I am the witness to those qualities but not them. When I realize that awareness belongs to my very being, I AM that being. I must allow myself to go beyond consciousness as it leads to identity. If I AM THAT, then this and everything else are beyond all thinking. Total awareness includes love, for awareness alone is not enough. I need love to fulfill me. I need to surrender to it, to live there. I can move into the fact, ease into the existence of the BEYOND, of the God that is Love. I know the source of consciousness only by BEING that source.

I must not let ideas dominate. I need to go beyond even the idea of I AM. I can let the conviction grow in me that I am more, infinitely above, any thought or idea. I AM takes me beyond pleasure and pain so that they become less important. I can let my uplifting discoveries work in me. While I focus on I AM, other enriching things can take place in my psyche for life is never at a standstill. Any undertaking is done in faith, but not the fact that I am. I don't have to prove that I AM for it is obvious. I AM is not something to think about but something to love. Ignorance of the true self masks the love that I am. I AM God can be said as I AM the Unknown, and so, in depth, I do not know what I AM. When Buddha was dying and his followers

thought their light was going out, he is reported to have said "Be a lamp unto yourself." By staying with I AM and letting it expand my consciousness, I can be a guru to myself.

I and THAT are one. I cannot hold it as I hold a thought, because a thought is never THAT. It is a felt sense. I may feel a presence or a sense of belonging. It may even feel warm and familiar, like an easing or a touch of joy. It wants to embrace all that is good, true and beautiful. I sense pure value that is more a comfort to the heart rather than something in my head. It sometimes feels like I'm coming home. I can be exhilarating over something I do not understand, something I want to hold onto but cannot. I don't have to comprehend someone or something in order to love and be close. Since THAT is the source of everything, IT is in everything, and anything can be a spark revealing its presence. At root of this is the sense that I AM.

I AM. Before Abraham ever existed, I AM. This is my truth and I need to claim it.

In my being is woven all space and time, their constraints transcended by my TRUE SELF.

My AMNESS is not a temporal by-pass. It is a positioning for allowing which springs up into my own knowing and loving. It's a tower of existence accepting all, for I am all.

God not only lives on my street. He occupies every room in my house, every cell of my body, every chamber of my mind, every thought I ever had.

God/Being/Existence is what I AM, for all is One. All exists for my knowing and loving. God wants to know and love, and that is what He gives me the power to do. God wants to live and love as me.

God is my joy and my pain. God is here now. My being is His presence. I AM.

Self-realization and God-realization go hand in hand. When I am born I already am a Self. My task is to know and love what the Self really is. Here there is a striking similarity between what God is and what I am, a shared unknowability. The knowing subject within can never become an object for me, for it is unknowable. I see, but I cannot see seeing. I hear but I cannot hear hearing. I can know but I cannot know knowing. I can certainly love the way I am made. In a sense I cannot know God but I can love God and become God. Love is rooted in the will, and the will attains to God more perfectly than the intelligence. Loving God is like winning God for one's self. God's all is also my all. The mind plays all kinds of mental gymnastics to say what God is or is not, while love lifts above the wiles of the mind. Knowing is always easier than loving for it feels safer and without risks. Love is closer to our essence for it demands an exercise of my will.

The ALL is easy to reach because it is my very being. Our desires really aim at happiness. And the greatest happiness is to love and be loved. All good or

compassionate aspirations can be fulfilled ending in GOODNESS ITSELF. The greatest good is GOD WHO IS LOVE.

Passions and desires fade away as the mind's silence is enraptured in MYSTERY. It takes time to ripen, and after a while, practice becomes formless.

I need to identify that I AM with the I AM that Jesus preached and offered to us for our own possession. "You in me and I in you" (John 14:20) is what Jesus holds out to us. I inhere in God and THAT in me. A building must exist in the architect's mind before it can exist on earth. It is the same with us in God, but forever. That is how One is formed.

It has been said that no one has ever seen God. The fuller quote is from 1John 4:12-13: "No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another, God abides in us; and His love has reached perfection in us. This is how we can know that we abide in Him and He abides in us: in that He has given us of His own Spirit."

Thus, any movement in us to love is the Holy Spirit Itself! In loving one another we are more than meeting God. The author of these words is telling us that the divine indwelling grants us greater intimacy with God than seeing Him. If I seek only good will toward others and act accordingly, then I am in God and God is in me.

One doesn't have to be a Christian to believe in Christ. He was a good man, a great man, who saw deeply into his own and our nature.

The inner sanctum opens to "I am God, not as He is, but as I am." All is One. I need to connect the Absolute Reality, the Source of All That Is, the Great Mystery that enlightened souls talk about, I need to connect that with what Jesus offers us in his I AM. I cannot be what God is not, and the "nots" point to the inexpressible that I AM. To me, self-forgiveness is a giant step toward seeing how I am God. For a long time I felt afraid and thought I didn't have that power. Then I realized that I can forgive myself for anything because God's power resides in me as my own.

I experience that I AM God and me at the same time. I AM expands to become universal. All is contained in the I AM. GOD and MYSELF are ONE. The Oneness empowers me to say things I thought others had to say to me. For example, "Be still and know that I am God." Divine consciousness is the secret of every one of us. Jesus' grand epiphany is to resound in each: "I am the way, the truth and the life," but everyone has to discover it for herself.

The proof is in the pudding. Understanding is not enough if I don't live the truth, the I AM, in my daily life. My identity, my I AM God, must be carried out in the world where I find myself. Love again points the way. Jesus instructed, "Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate" (Luke 6:36). In this section of Luke 6:27-38, it may seem the bar is set unbelievably high with statements like, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you," and "To the man who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek too." As difficult as it may be, I have recourse. We have seen the inestimable gift we have

been given in sharing God's divinity, and to whom much is given much is expected. I must never sell short God or myself in what can be done.

Some reprieve is given with other statements in this section: "Treat others as you would like them to treat you," and, "You will have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he himself is kind to ungrateful and the wicked." I don't have to be perfect all at once. If I am now as compassionate as I can be, I can build on that to a higher level of being. Love is one and love makes us one. Love as what I am is love making all one.

Love lies in the will. Change must come from within and willing is the true test of coming from within. Jesus knowing our human nature said, "That what is impossible to man is possible to God," (Matthew 19:26). Love is the triumph of God in me as well as my highest self-triumphing in myself. A true man or woman is made by giving up lower inclinations and accepting a higher will. When I am ready to be different, the all-important change takes place. We have a free will so that we can be rewarded for our own efforts.

Love is a degree of consciousness that transcends duality making the two one. As our level of understanding increases, our hearts grow. Love's immediate reward is psychological wholeness. How we do it is up to us. What I think determines how I feel which empowers what I do. Christ made the breakthrough showing how we can do the same. Paul gives a graphic description of how this happens. "For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into

one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the Law. This was to create one single New Man in himself out of the two of them by restoring peace through the cross, to unite them both in a single Body and reconcile them with God. In his own person he killed the hostility," (Ephesians 2:14-16).

The one fact that I can be sure of is that I AM. The I AM is a fundamental reality, a truth loving and lovable. That truth is all-powerful, for it includes all and accepts all. I AM IS GOD ITSELF. For the SPIRIT there is no second. Spirit is one with everything. As identical with God I consider it my highest state. All, including myself, are taking place in the womb and heart of God. I daily try to give myself completely to this I AM. As I go it's becoming more effortless and more natural. I feel I'm growing in it every day as it helps me join the material world with the spiritual. The bridge is love, and wise love makes the two one. Truth is lovable, but what often passes unnoticed is that truth is loving. Falling in love fills the empty spaces that I didn't know I had. I don't have to try to get as close to God as I can, for I am God as I am. I am embraced and embracing at the same time. Finally free, my cup of joy that runneth over is forever.

Henri J. M. Nouwen in his book, *THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON*, and Andrew Harvey in *SON OF MAN* give excellent accounts of how they matured into compassion and fatherhood. These are two profound writers on spiritual matters. Harvey was born in India in 1952, studied at Oxford University and became the

youngest person ever to be awarded a fellowship in 1973. Henri J. M. Nouwen was born in the Netherlands, ordained a priest, and taught at the University of Notre Dame as well as in the Divinity Schools of both Harvard and Yale Universities. These two pathfinders allowed and accepted the necessary changes in themselves. They uncovered the place within where God had chosen to dwell.

Taking to heart Jesus' parable of The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), Nouwen saw in himself images of the two sons as well as that of the Father. Here is how he sums up his own spiritual journey at the end of his beautiful book:

"Living out the spiritual fatherhood requires the radical discipline of being home....To claim for myself spiritual fatherhood and the authority of compassion that belongs to it, I have to let the rebellious younger son and the resentful elder son step up on the platform to receive the unconditional, forgiving love that the Father offers me, and to discover there the call to be home as my Father is home."

"Then both sons in me can gradually be transformed into the compassionate father. This transformation leads me to the fulfillment of the deepest desire of my restless heart. Because what

greater joy can there be for me than to stretch out my tired arms and let my hands rest in a blessing on the shoulders of my home-coming children."

Harvey sees the spiritual journey as moving from "seeking" to "finding." This does not imply that the journey ends. Rather it's a move from "going out" to mining the riches in oneself. He gives summary statements that I find enlightening:

"The 'safety' of being a 'follower' has to be abandoned for the 'trouble' of discovering the vastness and majesty of one's own and everyone's divine identity, and for the 'astonishment' that follows on such a discovery and such an effort (an astonishment that dissolves all previous categories of understanding and reveals the divinity of the universe). The safety of being a 'seeker' has to be exchanged for the 'trouble,' 'astonishment,' and responsibility for rulership of being a 'finder.' Only then can the truth of what Jesus is and knows be recognized as the truth of all beings, and known not through worship but as he knows it himself in direct, suffering, astonishing, ecstatic knowledge."

We listen to God or the Universe or Life and let it reverberate in our conscience. We then interpret what it is telling us. We want to hear what it says. We do this pretty much unconsciously. I think it helps to do this intentionally, to verbalize what comes to us, as Harvey and Nouwen did in the previous paragraphs. We are listening to Someone or Something! A secret that surfaces is that we are not alone. Are we being embraced by the Great Unknown? I like to see IT as a magnanimous magnificent Embrace holding all in the palm of its hand. In it I feel whole and complete. In the Old Testament it was written that God sees into the innermost parts of man, truly observes his heart, and listens to his tongue. God knows each of us has a particular song to sing. Imagination is a powerful tool and part of our makeup that we can use to our benefit. It is possible to love all that we can be, even if we don't fully know all that THAT is. We have to pass through all our earthly experiences to reach our divine goal: THAT.

In this work I have tried to bring together two grand versions about what we are. The first is what ancient and modern spiritual writers say on the subject, and the second is what Jesus offers us in his own teaching about what I AM. In this uncovering process, I would like to close with one of the world's greatest poets. Jelaluddin Rumi declares what he is, yet at the same time looks for who he is.

I AM

dust particles in sunlight.

I am the round sun.

To the bits of dust I say, "Stay."

To the sun, "Keep moving."

I am morning mist,  
and the breathing of evening.

I am wind in the top of a grove,  
and surf on the cliff.

Mast, rudder, helmsman, and keel,  
I am also the coral reef they founder on.

I am a tree with a trained parrot in its  
branches.

Silence, thought, and voice.

The musical air coming through a flute,  
a spark off a stone, a flickering in metal.

Both candle and the moth  
crazy around it.

Rose and the nightingale  
lost in the fragrance.

I am all orders of being,  
the circling galaxy,  
the evolutionary intelligence,  
the lift and the falling away.

What is and what isn't. You  
who know Jelaluddin, you

the One in all, say

WHO I AM.

SAY I AM YOU.

## **7 HERE IS WHAT I HEAR**

I often spoke of myself figuratively to help you understand what I mean to you. When I say "I am the bread of life," or "I am the light of the world," or "I am the way," I'm using words to show that what is essential for your earthly life, I am that for your everlasting life. You may say it's through the head to your heart. When you take to heart what I'm saying, you will recognize that natural hunger, thirst and death are limited and temporary. All that you may ever want is what I give you to inhere in your mind and heart and soul forever. What I AM I give to you to be who you are. Your being is part of my Being. I've adopted Old Testament words like bread, light, shepherd and vine that were used to describe what my Father was to Israel. What God was then, I am now. In addition to these symbols, God used the formula "I AM" to describe His action on behalf of his people. For example, "I am your salvation," or, "I am the Lord, your healer." My Beloved Disciple did well in recording the comparison I was making of myself with God of the Old Testament. Here I would

like to explain one of my favorite teachings that occurred when I was discussing with the Jews the place of Abraham.

I said, "Before Abraham even came into existence, I AM." But also, I lived on the earth and walked its ways, just as any other human being. "Son of Man" was one of my favorite titles. I joined the two together, the divine and the human, in one person. And you are the same. So I tell you, it's not wrong for you to say, "I am God, not as He is, but as I am." I share my "I AM" with you because I love you. Everything is God, not as He is, but as it is. All is one. Saying it helps you see the world in a new light. It highlights God becoming man; you can wonder at the Oneness of it all. Oneness means the lines of communication are always open. All that you do not know about the Father and me remains, but this you do know and can enjoy seeing God in all things. Your prayer can be:

"All is One  
We are your Son  
Thy will be done."

I say "We are your Son" because I take you into my embrace whether you are a woman or a man. I am a particular and unique Son of God, and in no way are you excluded from what I possess.

You may have to expand your notion of what God is. Because I share my nature with you and with all that exists, you can love and have good will toward everything in your environment. Although you may seek it, you don't have to have love returned to you. Don't let the actions of others determine what you do. You are God as you, so feel

comfortable in your own skin. You can give without receiving. What you are is a conscious loving being, just as I am.

Your mind searches to separate "this" from "that" in order to understand, but oneness is the prize. I said in my Last Discourse, "You in me and I in you." What I was trying to get across is that the dearest things I know I give to you and wait for you to accept so that all that I have are also yours. "I in you" is not a static deposit of one thing added to another but a living reality that makes for a divine/human union. It means that God is experiencing you as you, and you can experience yourself being transformed into God. This is what you essentially are which no word or thought or action can explain. It is an explosion beyond the mind! Whatever you think of, reality is beyond it. You need to witness all that you can and then go beyond the witness. The greatness and goodness of God does this for you. Someone has to make possible all that you are capable of. Never sell yourself or God short.

My gift to you is something that can grow beyond your fondest dreams. When I tried to explain this to my followers, I took the example of a child because they asked me who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I set the child in front of them and said, "I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven...for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs,"(Matthew 18:1-4; 19:14).

I would like to compare how you grow in my Father's kingdom with the way a child expands when he or she gets a gift. There is first a leap of joy knowing something is being given to her. She loves the red ribbon which she quickly slides over the edge. Then she unwraps the outer brown paper so she can get to the box. The box is closed but she puts her little fingers in the openings between the flaps and pries it apart. Finally she rustles through the tissue paper surrounding the gift. And there it is! It may be a doll, a toy, a phone, an iPod, a baseball glove, a certificate for her to get the puppy or kitten she longed for. For her it is ecstasy, wide-eyed wonder. The child is overjoyed with total contentment. It may be a small thing to us adults, but it is everything for the child at this moment. So in the kingdom of heaven you open and move to bigger and better things. Step by step, exhilaration builds. At times you feel fearless and invincible. You stand in awe at the joyful and peaceful moments you encounter. You are aware of an inner transformation.

One of my saints, Catherine of Genoa, put it this way, "My Me is God, nor do I recognize any other Me except my God Himself." While in awe about their earthly existence, others have phrased it, "I am THAT, you are THAT, all this is THAT." They knew THAT was a great mystery of which they were a part. Your amness or being is just part of mine. It is good for you to contemplate my words to warm up to what I am saying.

Realize how great God makes you. My Father can reveal Himself to you only in terms of your reaction to His revelation. He gives you the power to discern his revelation

and how you are to use it. You have the innate ability to know and to do what is right. And here you have an answer to how you are God, not as He is, but as you are. God cannot love the way you love without you! His loving and changing the world depends on you! That is the power of love that you have. All I ask of you is, "Be loving."

Our Father speaks to you: "I want you. My Spirit makes us one so that the risen Christ can work in you. Christ is alive in you to do the great works of love that he promised you would be able to do. We are with you always because we need you."

Sharing my Being (Amness) with you means I share my all with you. A fine spiritual writer has said that you are an ocean in a drop. He was perceptive in recognizing the abundance that is you. All methods of trying to reach me have some truth in them, yet ultimately all methods are to be dropped. As you go through life and are earnest in finding me, you will see that clothes you once wore no longer fit you. They cannot serve you anymore. You are constantly being reborn. "Ocean in a Drop" means that everything you need is already in you and what has to be dropped like worn out garments is your mind-set and your ego.

The way is beyond your head and into your own Spirit which is the Spirit of God. This is the part of my revelation that continues in you. God, who was understood as a great force in the Old Testament, becomes personal and intimate. Few people understand how spirit works. My Father and I as Spirit are working in everything everywhere

all the time. Creation, receiving, and becoming are happening simultaneously. God is here and everywhere all the time. His presence cannot be escaped. In the Old Testament you will find it written about wisdom and your destiny: "Wisdom is a spirit, a friend to man...since God sees into the innermost parts of him, truly observes his heart, and listens to his tongue. In each generation she (Wisdom) passes into holy souls, she makes them friends of God and prophets" (Wisdom 1:6; 7:27).

Enlightened people use different ways into God's presence. In your own time astute observers have phrased it remarkably well. They point out that some perceive a hidden power encompassing the course of people, things, and events in the course of time. Others seek and find freedom from human suffering in meditation or in flight to God with love and trust. Still others realize the insufficiency of this changing world and achieve a state of perfect liberation or illumination by their own efforts or through higher help. These attempts highlight the restlessness of the human heart. They show that whatever you accomplish in your temporary existence, it cannot completely satisfy you. Meditators have said you pass through atriums of many objects, to no objects, to who you really are.

My Evangelist, John, tried to explain what I am saying in his use of "exercising faith" and "Paraclete." "Exercising faith" keeps you from over-thinking God. Faith is more of an action than an idea. John in his Gospel never uses faith as a noun, a thing, as a mental construct or idea. Not once! But he uses "exercising faith" as an action, a

personal initiative over and over again. In fact, that is the only way he uses it. John stresses active behavior or conduct to any laid-back state. He wants you to feel invigorated. He is trying to make faith and my words experiential for you, hoping they will become real for you.

John was trying to tell you how faith works in you and changes you. Faith must be vibrant; he is thinking of faith as an individual enterprise. It's an engagement. John wants you to experience what he experienced, to reach out to me and trust what I say. Let my words resound through your inner ear and into your heart. There must be an internal assent, an acceptance from inside. Faith is an explosion from within to include everything. John wants to let your heart dance to the tune I play for you. It's the difference between talking about the dance and actually dancing. In so doing you are still yourself but letting a higher power work in you. Trust and accept me into your heart. My claims will help you devote your life to love. "Knowing" and "believing" are the same for John. His response to me was, "Lord, I commit to you and accept your claims; I dedicate my life to you." He would like your response to be the same. The commitment is not emotional but a willingness to respond to God's demands as they are presented in and by me. It is an acceptance of me and what I claim to be and dedication of your life to me. Faith has to flourish.

You can engage, trust and commit just as my disciple, Paul, says, "Love is patient; love is kind. Love bears all things, endures all things. Love does not come to an end." And you give yourself to love because the prize is

so far greater than anything you can imagine. The living reward awaiting not only hereafter but here and now transforms your whole life. Common indwelling, life and love, binds the Father, you and me in a basic unity. This intimate union expresses itself in a way of life lived in love. The greatest act of God's friendship to man is man's receiving a share of God's life. This is the life by which God Himself lives. Eternal life is the life of the Age to Come given here and now.

It's not easy to commit to another. You want to be in charge of your own destiny. For your well-being, however, you have to commit to someone or something. You get strength from what you believe in. And at the beginning you can't see that committing to me is summoning the best that is in you. So you'll do it, and then you'll pull back. People normally waffle back and forth. My Father's charge of old is worth repeating for you to apply it to your mind: "Be still and know that I AM God," (Psalm 46:10). I'm interested in your head but more in your heart. Knowledge without love is barren; at worst it is deadly. If you silence your thoughts, it will free you. It's in the heart where real dedication lies. What's important is for you to open your heart and be creative. The heart has no rules, and so you have to harness love. If you do, you will feel safe and whole. I want you to be original as John was in hearing me and taking to heart in your own way what I said, and as good people have done ever since. The legacy of most people is not what they know but how they have lived and loved.

Language and word choice demonstrate the play between the divine and the human, the eternal taking on a visible face, the seemingly two becoming one for human use that is not always understood. John was especially creative in coming up with the word Paraclete. None of my other Evangelists used this term. It perfectly states what I meant to say when I was no longer with you in my body. In the language of the day, a paraclete was "one called alongside to help," an advocate or defense attorney, similar to the role a lawyer plays in legal matters in your day, but much broader in his activities. No one translation captures all the functions the Paraclete performs for you in you.

I think his actions could be compared to how a loving mother looks after her child, or how a good friend would treat you. He would stand by you, speaking on your behalf if you were challenged. He would not leave you alone but console you with his company when needed. He would seek to help in any way he could, perhaps suggesting a course of action you have not thought of. He could be a guide if you feel lost. Spirit is versatile. All this is what my Spirit, the Paraclete accomplishes in you as your spirit. My dying on the cross was not just a giving up of the Spirit, but rather a voluntary handing over my Spirit for the task yet to be done. John does not identify a recipient of this gesture of handing over, which is a symbolic way of indicating that my Spirit will henceforth perform the same work in you and in others which I did when I walked the earth.

You must remember that I also grew as a human being. I was convinced before all else that my Father loved

me. Knowing I was so loved enabled me to love my enemies, to not be angry at those who opposed me.

My whole life was to show how my Father and I love you. If you are convinced that someone loves you, that you are genuinely cared for, you will extend love to others. The wounds and scars of people who have hurt you can hinder your initiative, but if you persevere in trying to be kind to others you will triumph in the long run. When others oppose your goodness, understand that they are ignorant and don't know what they are doing. You may like people to be a certain way, but that is not your responsibility. If you keep loving in anyway you can, in even the smallest way, your own personal and unique path reveals itself to you. Then you can grow into the fullness of yourself.

I have to use words to communicate with you as I had to with John and my other disciples. It's a matter of reality, my reality, put into language. You must look beyond language to the reality words represent, and that is what the Paraclete does for you. Words describe events. The event here is revealing myself for the purpose of communication. This communication is for the Word, Me, to become present to you now. The speaker, the communicator, is in a certain sense, the goal of the communication. It is a communication of Myself. My coming to you in love transcends all natural ways of speaking. You must allow my words to become a revealing event for you here and now. You must listen and act.

If you allow it, the role of the Paraclete in your life can be dramatic. He is invisible to the world because the Paraclete is within you. The only way the Paraclete can exercise his ministry is through you and your way of life. If the Paraclete is to bear witness to me, it is through the witnessing-life of my believers. The singular way the world can know that my death was not the end is because the Paraclete or SPIRIT which animated me is alive in you and in my other followers. His presence is still with my disciples. His Spirit is still alive and changes you. He is the fountain of life and the flame of love in you. My Father and I need you more than you need us, for the world is hanging in balance. A compassionate world starts with you. You tip that balance as you become knowing and loving, and revelation continues. My Father delights in you, for His well-being depends upon what you do.

You may not always be able to see it, but the world is love in action. The good and the evil are manifestations of the Spirit as they are. The Spirit is everywhere all the time, working with man's free will to accomplish One ultimate purpose. How can it be otherwise since my Father is the Father of all? Love seeks to express itself. In one way or another, sometimes in very devious ways, that is what is happening in the world because love wants growth. Suffering gets attention and needs it, which itself is a display of love. The question is, "How do you look upon the suffering in the world and in yourself?"

The sufferings of men, women and children are the teardrops of God fallen to earth and waiting for the light to

show them a way back to heaven. Oneness with God is always present, even in the direst of circumstances.

You need to be a father to yourself to foster God in you. Our Father wants his glory and love to unfold and blossom in you, not as He is, but as you are. He needs for you to realize that He has a real desire to simply be with you. My entire life and teaching had one purpose, and that is, to reveal the infinite and inexhaustible fatherly and motherly love of God and to let that love guide your daily life. I have promised a revolution through you as my Beloved Disciple says of me:

"Let me firmly assure you, the man who has faith in me will perform the same works that I perform. In fact, he will perform far greater than these, because I am going to the Father, and whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it." (John 14: 12-14).

Many of my other writers proclaim what I have foretold, that you, my disciples, will be given the power to perform marvelous works. The condition is that you seek what I seek, the betterment of all concerned. You can love God and your neighbor simply and for no other reason except that you choose to love. You can always move toward greater and more expansive love. Heaven is here now every time you choose to love; hell is also here now every time you choose to not love. Some day you will realize, as others have, that there is only now; the present is the only thing that does not end. Eternity is timeless.

The Paraclete through you is still glorifying me and bearing witness to me. In the very first verse of the Paraclete passages (14:16), John explains the specific way in which the presence of the Paraclete finds realization, that is, when you love me and keep my commandments: "If you love me and keep my commandments, then at my request the Father will give you another Paraclete to be with you forever."

I know I talked mostly about eternal life when I was on earth, but that was because I did not want you to get lost in what you can see and touch during your earthly pilgrimage. Eternal life means my everlasting love begins with what you do on earth. I was not thinking simply of my Father's work to be done, but I was also concerned about your own well-being. You are actually living in two worlds at the same time. When you bring the two together you have the assurance that all is well. In my Father's hands the two are one; His loving smile is all-embracing. He wants to always be with you. You may call it my work and your work, but in reality they are one. You have to do what you like, finding your own way in what appeals to you.

I like what some Romans say, "Primum vivere," or, "First live." My Father and I build everlasting life onto your human life. It is all holy for all is one. There's always life, life now and everlastingly ahead of you. Life is where you can't miss me, where you'll always find me. You need to realize how great it is to be alive. Any care you might have dwindles facing this great gift. You need to trust the life my Father has given you. You can trust the most when you fear the greatest. Life is in my Father's womb

everywhere all the time. Watch how you live your life; that is what is most important. Your exemplary life is the medicine needed for the world's health. However varied your work may be, if done in love, we are accomplishing our one purpose, and that is awakening the world to its ultimate purpose that all is One.

How little you know about yourself! What great power you have! Fingerprints are not the only thing that make you unique. No! All your body parts are different from anyone else's. In the future a medical prescription will probably be applied only to your singular DNA and no one else's. You know even less about yourself in spiritual matters. One of the most valuable lessons you can learn is that spirit is always present and lives outside of space and time. If you turn to me I am always with you and I am still speaking to you. Appreciate your uniqueness, for your destiny is to sing your own song. When you love, it is different from anyone else loving. You must create God in you, in your own likeness, to become God. This also is what I promised you by giving you my Presence, my Paraclete, to be with you forever.

I want to stress the fuller meaning of I AM. Your AMNESS, that is, your BEING, is eternal as I let my I AM become your I AM. This is what I share with you, but you have to cooperate to realize the fullness of its glory. Buried in your soul is the potential to become one with me. I have tried to show you the way. The three other evangelists talked about my "I AM" claim, and John capitalized on this early tradition, elaborating its meaning dramatically. John was the only one who talked about my existence with God

before creation. In my discussion with the Jews on the place of Abraham, there is no question that I am speaking here as Yahweh did in the Old Testament. Proof of the implication of my divinity lies in the fact that after I said it, the Jews try to stone me for blasphemy.

Here I would like to point out to you what it means when you accept my claim of divinity. As Jesus I AM God but I am also a human being.

John points out that "I am in the Father and the Father is in me...and you in me and I in you." This and other indwelling passages make it clear that I share my I AM with you. I'm not only with you, I AM you. You are me. To really "know" something, you have to BE it. This is why you can say, "I am God, not as He is, but as I am." I promise my presence not to mystical supermen but to you and my followers in general. My truth, my being, becomes you. You want to be all that you can be, and I have put that drive in you. But you can have that only by letting my being become your being while you still know yourself to be yourself.

A real mystery for you is God becoming man. But that is only half of the mystery, for man also becomes God. So, as you can say, "I am God, not as He is, but as I am," I can say, "God is man, not as man is, but as God is." It is God's goodness and love becoming your being. Is it really so hard to understand? Remember, as John's Gospel says, all things came to be in me. What is, is in God. So life, your life, is already in me. Food like apples and oats become your body. A seed becomes a rose. A pine cone becomes a

giant sequoia hundreds of feet tall and lives for thousands of years. Some of your redwoods started their life before Moses was born. A caterpillar, a mere worm, spins a cocoon, dissolves in it, and becomes a beautiful butterfly! A seed from your father placed in your mother's womb, and here you are! It is natural and a miracle at the same time. All these examples illustrate an inner working. So God is in you, turning you into Himself. Since God is in you, you are OK and love will prevail since that is what God is. That is your reality which you communicate or not.

My Beloved Disciple put it beautifully when he said, "The Word was made flesh." It is God speaking to you, coming to you, and awaiting your response. Then it was my speaking to their ears, just as now it is my Word to your heart. You can hear it and relax. I want to take away all the struggles of your mind and make it easy for you to be aware that you are loved. Once you are convinced of that, then you can love in return. You cannot see seeing; you just see. You cannot hear hearing; you just hear. You cannot know knowing; you just know. But you can love, and you can love loving. What is lacking so often is pure will, the willingness to love. The more you love, the more energy you will have. Action follows conviction. You need to allow yourself not just to be loved, but to be loved beyond your fondest dreams. Loved so much that I lay down my life for you! Underneath it all, you are worthy of it or I would not have done it. You may not think you are worthy of it because of what you may have done. But you are worthy of it because of the way I made you.

You must dive into your own depths to see how you are God. Once you dare to do it, you will see it's no great mystery. It's simply to be good and do good, the loving thing, in the life you are given. You are different from all others, and so you will do things differently. You will sparkle wherever you go. God awaits you and others to do the same and light up the world.

You may need reawakened at times by praying, meditating, and listening to others. You may have to overcome self-centered preferences which limit you. Go beyond your old self. If you hold to your conviction that good overcomes evil and you accept what I say that life is everlasting, people will call you an idealist. But you must also be a realist in your current life. You must accept not just what you want to be, but you must also accept what is. Together they bring your true being to the fore. My I AM becomes your I AM. You can exhilarate knowing that what you truly are, our shared I AM, carries you beyond anything the mind can muster. Acceptance of what life brings is a key, but it can at times be difficult. There are many aids on the way to full realization, but one trumps them all which is indispensable, and that is love. My evangelists saw this in how they all stressed love in their writings. I dealt with people as they were when I met them.

In Mark it was a scribe who asked me what is the first of all commandments. When I said it was to love God with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself, the scribe saw the light and said it was true. Then he declared that love was greater than any holocaust or sacrifice. It was an astounding statement

because he knew how important sacrifices were to the Jews of that time. Yet he saw how love was greater than any or all of their offerings.

In Matthew, you see the Pharisees getting together to embarrass me when they asked what is the greatest commandment of the law. I gave the same answer of loving God and your neighbor as yourself. Since the Pharisees were strict adherents to the law, I told them that the Law and the Prophets must be subservient to love: "On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets also."

In Luke, a lawyer thought he could disconcert me and asked what must he do to gain eternal life. I, in turn, asked him since he was a lawyer, "What is written in the Law? What do you read there?" He gave the correct answer regarding love of God and neighbor. I told him he was right: "Do it and life is yours." But then he wanted to justify himself and so he asked, "Who is my neighbor?" That is when I told him the story of the Good Samaritan taking pity on a half dead and abandoned stranger. I am glad the story is often repeated to show what love is in practice.

I knew that my putting so much emphasis on love would alienate many of my listeners. They were embedded in their beliefs of following the Law, hearing the Prophets, and offering sacrifices. I knew and you must realize how dangerous it is to come between a person and their beliefs. It led to my crucifixion and you may suffer consequences for your convictions. What they did to me was wrong, but I

knew it was driven by fear. They didn't know what they were doing. They didn't know that love is freeing, and I hope you trust love enough to let it free you. If you love deeply enough it can free you of all cares.

Paul, as mentioned earlier, demonstrated very graphically what love is in practice. In doing what he and my scribes say, your love is different from anyone else's, and I need all of you. For the reality of my Presence among you, for revelation to continue, I need you more than you need me. Look into your spaceless timeless being, and your action will give testimony of the wisdom and love we share. Your self-realization will take you beyond all relative notions to Being Yourself, to Absolute Love and Wisdom that is mine and yours.

If you take seriously what witnesses and writers say about me, and listen to what I have said, and look deeply into your own heart, all you have to do is love in every way you can for the whole of your life. Nothing else is needed. Love has no definition and no boundary. It is what it is, pure and simple. John has only one commandment: love. When he says, "God is love," he is not giving a precise definition of God. Rather, he is saying how God acts toward you and everyone. If you immerse yourself in love, your spirit and my Spirit will become one. The shared identity between God and man is there, and you may have to spend eternity fathoming what that really means. You will be free to discover it. In each case my writers were trying to simplify for you what is to be done, cutting through barriers, objections and any difficulty. John is clear that the absence of love on earth is the same as the absence

of knowledge of God. He says that no one has ever seen God, but implies that love of God gives you even greater intimacy with God because God is abiding in you and His love has reached perfection in you. John was correct in uttering perhaps the most sublime statement of all Scripture when he says love is God: "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom grew up in the Pittsburgh area attending strict public schools that had a mix of races, religions and cultures. After high school, at the prodding of an older brother and a widowed mother, he entered the University of Pittsburgh to major in writing. Feeling lost and wondering what his own "purpose" was, he left after his junior year to enter the Catholic seminary. There he majored in philosophy, finding peace and order immersed in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and the mystics. He was ordained a priest and joined the Sulpician Society (S.S.) whose sole purpose is the training of young men for the priesthood. After two Bachelor degrees and a Master's degree in English literature, philosophy and theology, he was sent to the renowned University of Louvain, Belgium, to get his doctorate in theology.

Having successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on the Servant of God in John's Gospel, he taught theology and counseled seminarians for thirteen years in Seattle, Baltimore, Detroit, and Washington, D.C. at the Catholic University of America. Inspired by Pope John XXIII on a

visit to Rome, and by the radical decrees on non-Christian religions the Pope fostered at Vatican II, Tom left the priesthood to mine the riches he felt lying in other pastures which he studied. He visited and learned from masters at seven Buddhist and Zen centers from New York to Hawaii.

He married, became a general manager in a business venture, and counseled in a private clinic. Happily married to Helen since 1971, he lives in Dearborn, Michigan, with their cat, Charmer. As co-worker and true friend, his wife set up a website for Tom to continue his work:

[www.findingoneness.com](http://www.findingoneness.com). His purpose: giving to others the riches he found in the world's spiritual traditions in the pursuit of the Oneness of everything. Tom sees spirituality inseparable from one's uniqueness. He joins this concept with the Eastern notions that oneness is a reality we can experience.

Tom's other books are:

OCEAN IN A DROP

HONORING GOD WITHIN

FINDING ONENESS, The Power  
of Loving Awareness

THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY

MY STORY, Ramblings on a Spiritual Journey

MARKS AND REMARKS, Inspirations to Live By  
SUPERSEED, a whimsical fictional story.

They may be downloaded free at his website  
([www.findingoneness.com](http://www.findingoneness.com))  
or for purchase at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).







